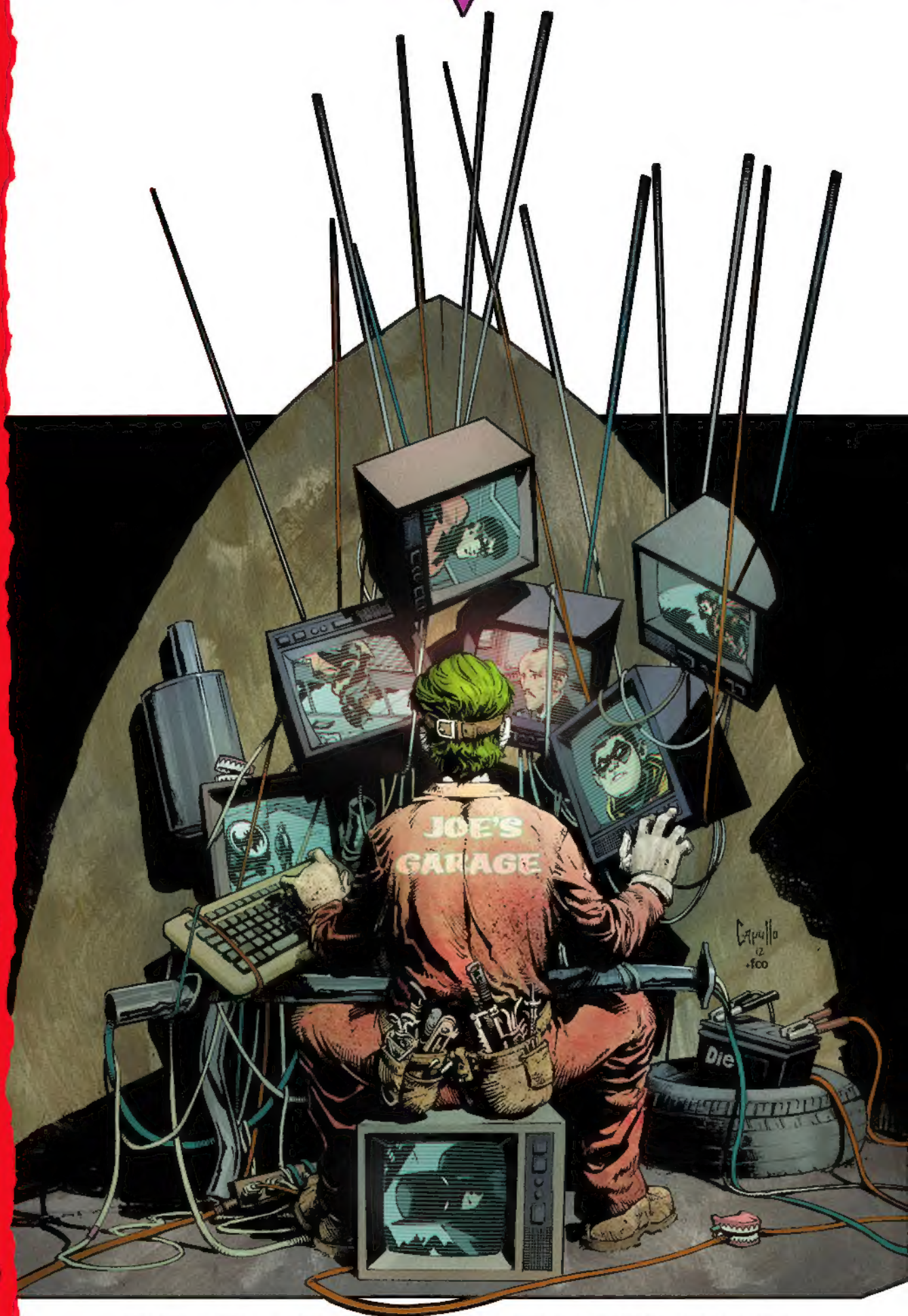




DEATH OF THE FAMILY

S
F
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VOL.
1

Collecting Batman v2 13-17, Batgirl v4 13-16,
Catwoman v4 13-14, Suicide Squad v3 14-15,
Batman & Robin v2 15-16, Detective Comics v2 15-16,
Nightwing v3 15-16, Red Hood & the Outlaws 15-16,
Teen Titans v4 15-16

DEATH OF THE FAMILY

He murdered Jason Todd, paralyzed Barbara Gordon and created more mischief and mayhem than any other villain in the DC Universe.

And he did it all for a laugh.

The Joker is the Dark Knight's greatest foe and deadliest adversary, but after gruesomely removing his own face in the pages of Detective Comics v2 #1, he remained absent from Gotham City for the past year - biding his time and planning for his next big punchline.

Now, the Joker's back - and he's set his sights on the entire Bat-Family.

Thanks to those who made the original releases:

**Zone-Empire
Nahga-Empire
digital-Empire
digital-TheGroup
Megan-Empire**

JK-Empire

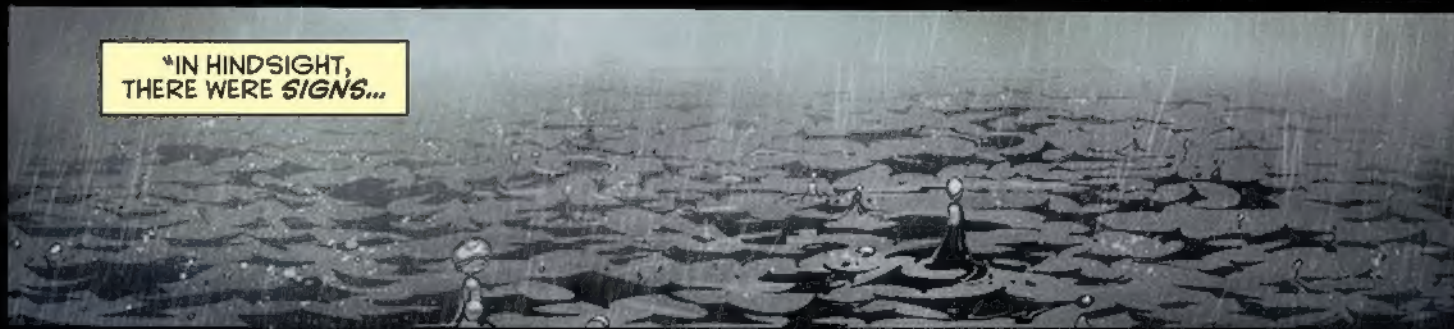
G85-Empire

Collection: Batman v2 13-17, Batgirl v4 13-16,
Catwoman v4 13-16, Suicide Squad v3 14-15,
Batman & Robin v3 15-16, Detective Comics v2 15-16,
Nightwing v3 15-16, Red Hood & the Outlaws 15-16,
Teen Titans v4 15-16

VOL.

4

"IN HINDSIGHT,
THERE WERE *SIGNS*...



"...OMENS OF THE
TERRIBLE THINGS
TO COME.

"THE FIRST ONE CAME
WITH THE *RAINS*.



"WITH THE EARLY SNOWS BLOCKING
ITS MOUTH, THE RAINS FLOODED THE
GOTHAM RIVER, ACTUALLY *REVERSING*
ITS COURSE FOR THREE FULL DAYS.



"THE SECOND SIGN CAME SOON
AFTER. A *LION* AT THE GOTHAM
ZOO GAVE BIRTH TO A DEFORMED
CUB, A CUB WITH *TWO HEADS*.



"RIVERS RUNNING
BACKWARDS. BEASTS
BORN WRONG.



"WE SHOULD HAVE
SEEN IT COMING..."





...WE SHOULD HAVE READ THE BONES.

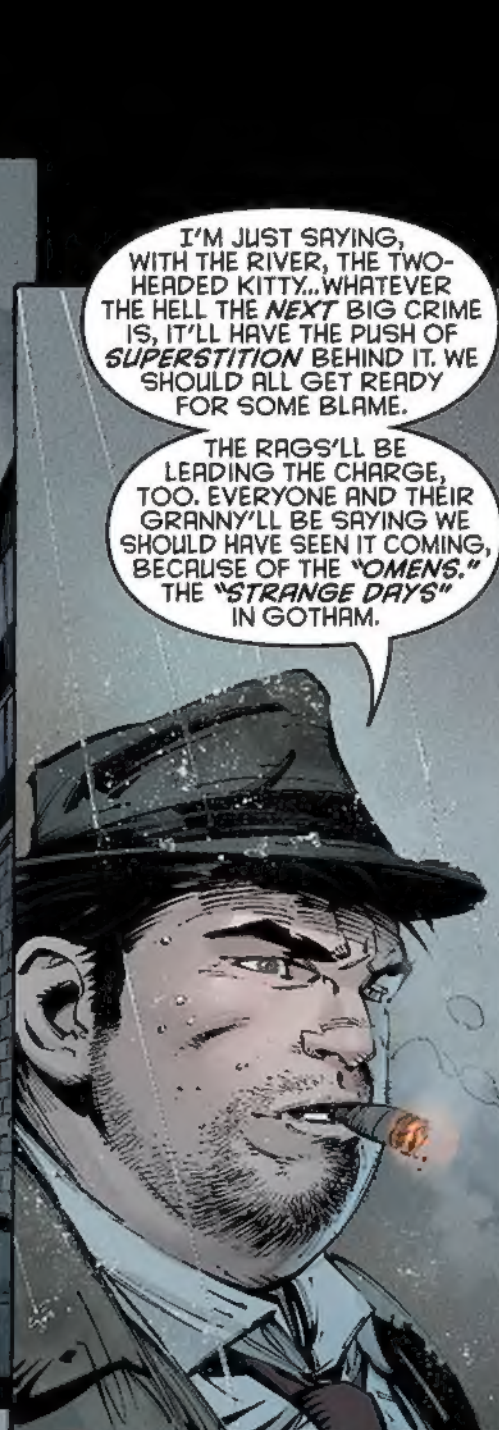
HE SHOULD HAVE, TOO.

MOST OF ALL, HIM.



SOUND ABOUT RIGHT, HARVEY? THAT'S WHAT YOU'RE WORRIED THE *NEWSPAPERS* WILL SAY?

HELL, COMMISSIONER, YOU COULD WRITE THE COPY YOURSELF.



I'M JUST SAYING, WITH THE RIVER, THE TWO-HEADED KITTY...WHATEVER THE HELL THE *NEXT* BIG CRIME IS, IT'LL HAVE THE PUSH OF *SUPERSTITION* BEHIND IT. WE SHOULD ALL GET READY FOR SOME BLAME.

THE RAGS'LL BE LEADING THE CHARGE, TOO. EVERYONE AND THEIR GRANNY'LL BE SAYING WE SHOULD HAVE SEEN IT COMING, BECAUSE OF THE "*OMENS*." THE "*STRANGE DAYS*" IN GOTHAM.



PROBABLY.

AND THAT DOESN'T BOTHER YOU. AT ALL?

OF COURSE IT DOES. WHAT BOTHERS ME *MORE* IS THAT PART OF ME WORRIES THEY'RE RIGHT.

BUT HONESTLY, RIGHT NOW, THIS MOMENT, WHAT BOTHERS ME MOST...



...IS RIGHT OVER THERE.

Another one down
Sorry
Commish



THAT WAS THE LAST ONE, EH?

EVERY SINGLE HIDEOUT I HAD UP HERE FOR MY SMOKES. EXPOSED AND TAGGED. HELL, I'VE ONLY GOT ONE HIDING SPOT LEFT AT HOME AND BARBARA'S SURE TO FIND IT SOON, THE WAY SHE HOUNDS ME.

WHAT THE HELL WAS I THINKING, OFFERING A DAMN PRIZE... A DAY OFF.

YOUR HEALTH, PROBABLY. BUT WHO AM I TO TALK?

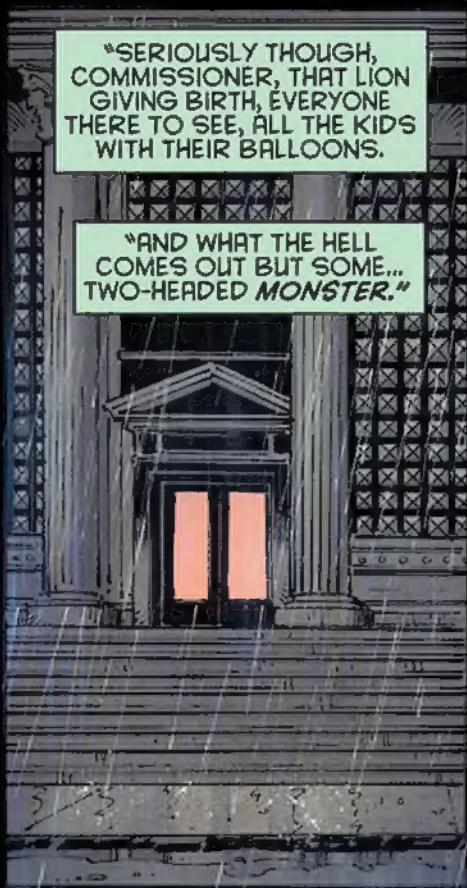


MAYBE, BUT TRUTH BE TOLD, I NEVER THOUGHT THEY'D ACTUALLY FIND THEM ALL.



AW, BE THE PROUD DADDY.

~SIGH~ ALL RIGHT. LET US DESCEND. I HAVE A FEW THINGS TO FINISH BEFORE I CLOCK OUT.

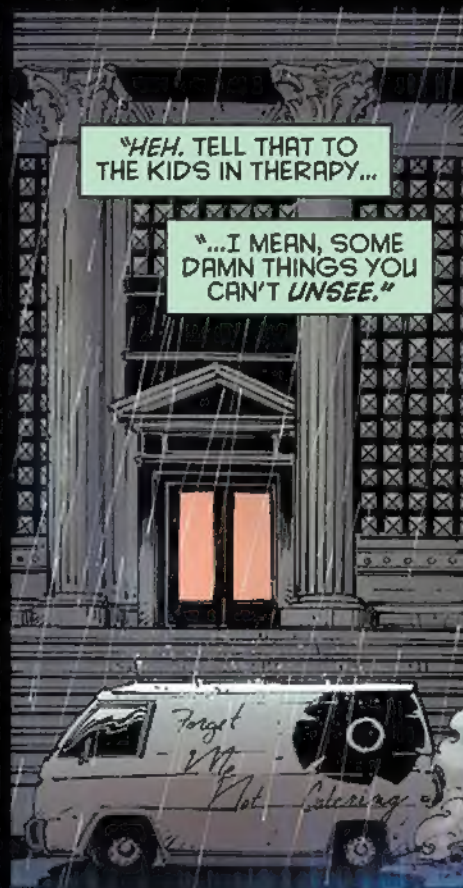


"SERIOUSLY THOUGH, COMMISSIONER, THAT LION GIVING BIRTH, EVERYONE THERE TO SEE, ALL THE KIDS WITH THEIR BALLOONS.

"AND WHAT THE HELL COMES OUT BUT SOME... TWO-HEADED MONSTER."



"POLYCEPHALY. IT'S NOT AS UNCOMMON AS YOU THINK."



"HEH. TELL THAT TO THE KIDS IN THERAPY..."

"...I MEAN, SOME DAMN THINGS YOU CAN'T UNSEE."





COMMISSIONER, WE FOUND THESE TWENTIES IN A HOT SPOT IN THE NARROWS. THE IODINE TEST WAS CLEAN, THOUGH. YOU WANT ME TO ORDER MORE ANALYSIS?

NO, DON'T BOTHER. THEY'RE BLEACHED AND REPRINTED.

BUT HOW CAN YOU TELL?



I CAN SMELL IT ON THE BILL.

SERIOUS?

UH, NO. JACKSON IS LOOKING LEFT, NOT RIGHT, SEE?

WHAT THE-- HOW DID I NOT CATCH THAT?

GO EASY ON YOURSELF, DANIELS. BACK IN CHICAGO, I--



Zzt

... EVERYONE BE CALM. STAY WHERE YOU ARE. THE GENERATOR SHOULD--



--AND THERE WE GO. IS EVERYONE...



...ALL RIGHT...?

NO, NOT YOU...

ZZT

HELLOOO,
GOTHAM'S FINEST!
NOW STOP ME IF
YOU'VE HEARD
THIS ONE...

...A MAN
WALKS INTO
A BAR...

EVERYONE,
WATCH OUT! IT'S
JOKER! HE'S IN
THE ROOM!

JOKER?

JOKER IS
IN HERE?!

AW, WHAT'S THE
MATTER? YOU'VE HEARD
IT ALREADY? OKAY THEN,
LET'S TRY SOME NEW
MATERIAL!

JOKER!
PUT YOUR
HANDS IN...
WHAT?
WHERE?

ALL RIGHT, HOW
ABOUT THIS ONE?
OFFICER BRADTREE!
A CLOWN WALKS
INTO A BAR...

NO,
PLEASE! STAY
AWAY!

YOU'VE
HEARD IT,
EH?

CRACK

TOUGH
CROWD, THE OLD
G.C.P.D.!

BRADTREE.
NO...

SHOW
YOURSELF, YOU
MONSTER!

HEEE HEE
HEEEEEE

ALL RIGHT,
TAKE THREE! OFFICER
GUADALUPE! A CLOWN
WALKS INTO A POLICE
STATION...

DON'T...
D-DON'T.

WHAT?!
YOU'VE HEARD
THIS ONE, TOO?
SIGH...

CRACK

STOP
IT!

AW, I'M JUST TRYING TO GET A LAUGH, JIMBO! IT'S A CLASSIC, TOO.

SO MANY VARIATIONS! "A CLOWN IN A HAWAIIAN SHIRT KNOCKS ON A DOOR." HEE HEE...OR MAYBE, "A BAT FLIES INTO A ROOM..." OR EVEN, "A CLOWN WALKS INTO A POLICE STATION LOOKING FOR HIS FACE!" HAHANA!



FINE, JUST LEAVE THEM ALONE! YOU HEAR ME?! COME FOR ME! LEAVE THEM ALONE!

HEE HEE...OH, JIMMY. ALL RIGHT, ALL RIGHT. I KNOW WHEN MY ACT HAS BOMBED. I MISSED YOU WHILE I WAS GONE! ALMOST AS MUCH AS I MISSED HIM! I'LL BE SEEING HIM SOON ENOUGH, THOUGH. AND HE DOES HAVE MY CALLING CARD...

...YOU'RE LOOKING SO WELL, THOUGH! LITTLE BARBARA, TOO!

DON'T YOU SAY HER NAME!

SO HEALTHY, BOTH OF YOU...BUT I ADMIT, I'M DISAPPOINTED IN YOU, TOO, GORDO. ALL THE WORK YOU DO TO MAKE BABS PROUD, AND THEN YOU GO AND BLOW IT. YOU HIDE THINGS.



DOESN'T HE HIDE THINGS, OFFICER MCCABE?

GET OFF ME, YOU--

CRACK

NO!

YESSSS, COMMISH...YES YOU DO HIDE THINGS.

LIKE THAT LAST PACK OF SMOKE!

THE ONE YOU HIDE IN YOUR APARTMENT...

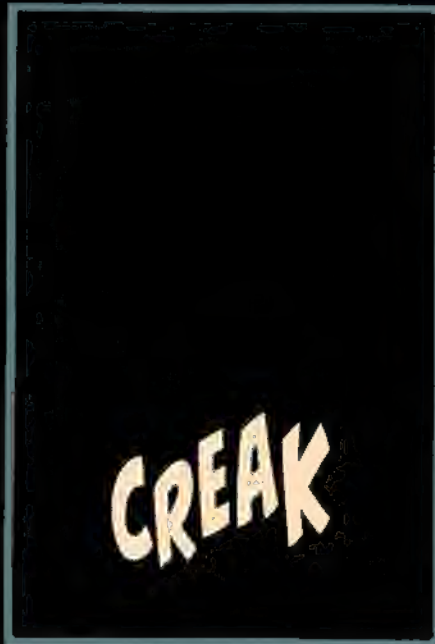
...IN THAT FINAL HIDING SPOT WHERE BARBARA WON'T LOOK... WHERE NO ONE WILL.

UNDER YOUR BED, IN THE WIRE NETTING.

SOMETIMES I LIE UNDER THERE AT NIGHT AND LISTEN TO YOU SLEEP. THE SAD THINGS YOU SAY... HOW I WANT TO JUST REACH MY ARMS UP AND...



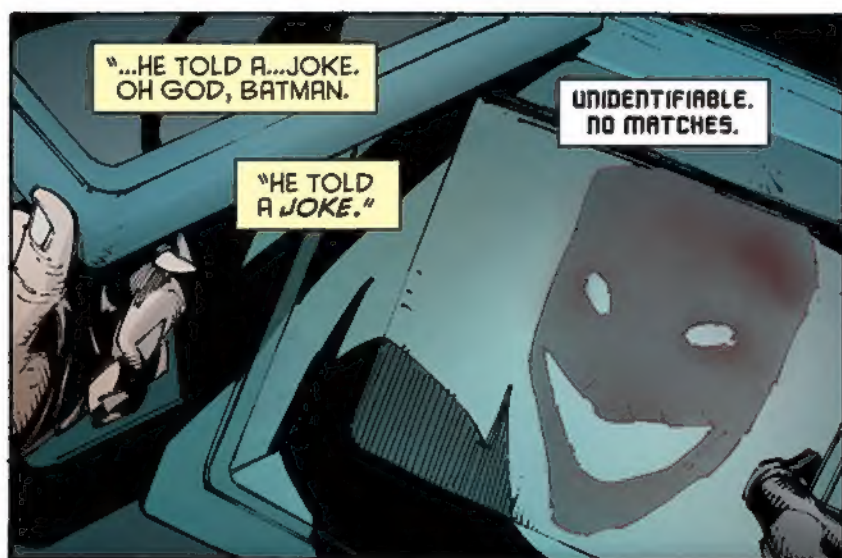
HAHAHA
HAHA!



CREAK



BLAM
BLAM





RUN FIBER TRACE AGAIN.

UNIDENTIFIABLE. NO MATCHES.

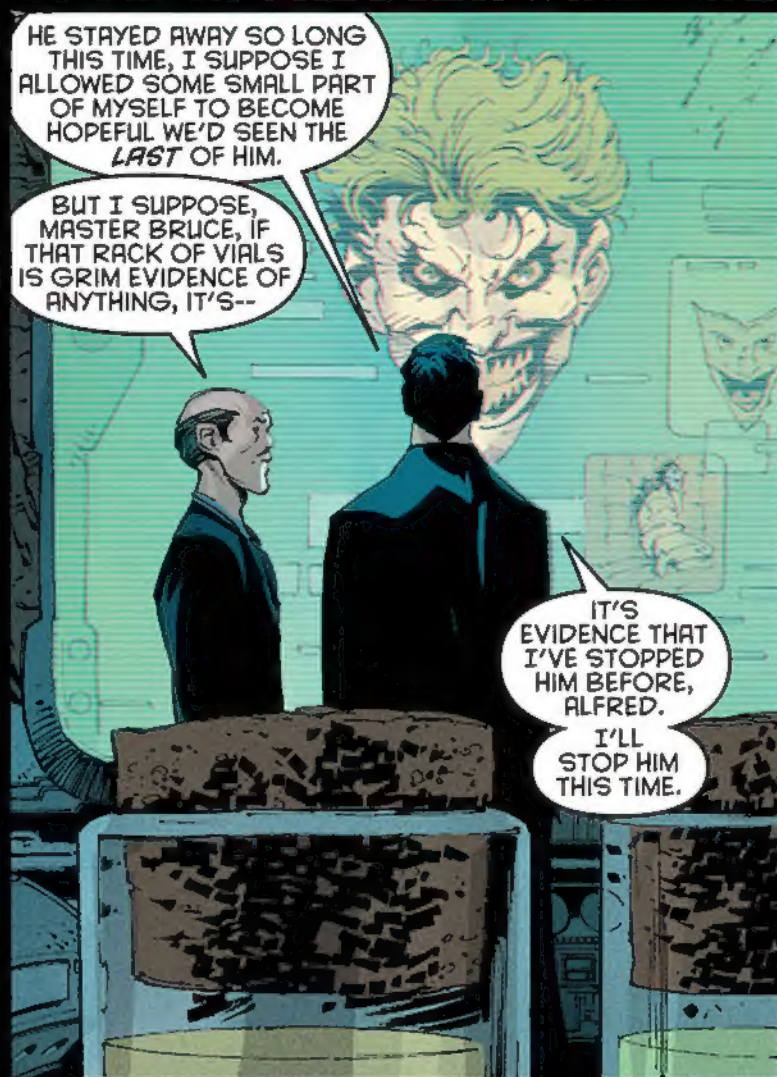


...



YOU MUST HAVE KNOWN HE'D BE BACK SOMETIME.

YES, I KNEW.



HE STAYED AWAY SO LONG THIS TIME, I SUPPOSE I ALLOWED SOME SMALL PART OF MYSELF TO BECOME HOPEFUL WE'D SEEN THE *LAST* OF HIM.

BUT I SUPPOSE, MASTER BRUCE, IF THAT RACK OF VIALS IS GRIM EVIDENCE OF ANYTHING, IT'S--

IT'S EVIDENCE THAT I'VE STOPPED HIM BEFORE, ALFRED.

I'LL STOP HIM THIS TIME.



OF COURSE YOU WILL. FORGIVE ME, SIR. IT'S SIMPLY THAT WHEN IT COMES TO *HIM*, I SUPPOSE, I GIVE MYSELF--AND YOU-- MORE LICENSE TO HOPE. AND *FEAR*.

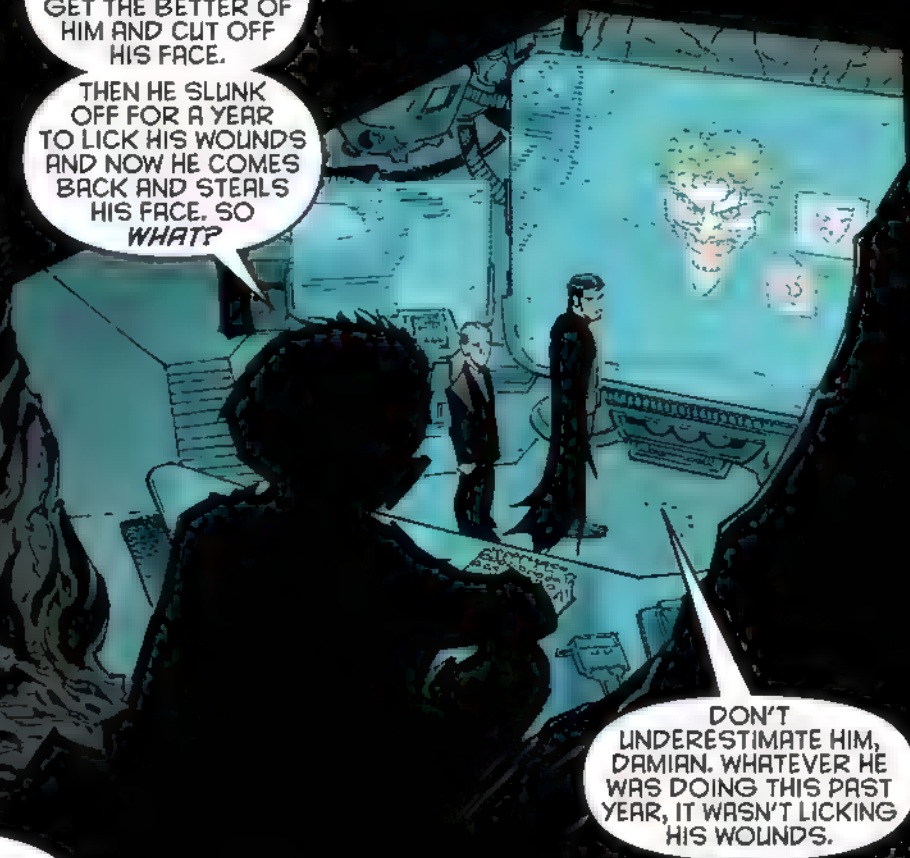
FEAR?



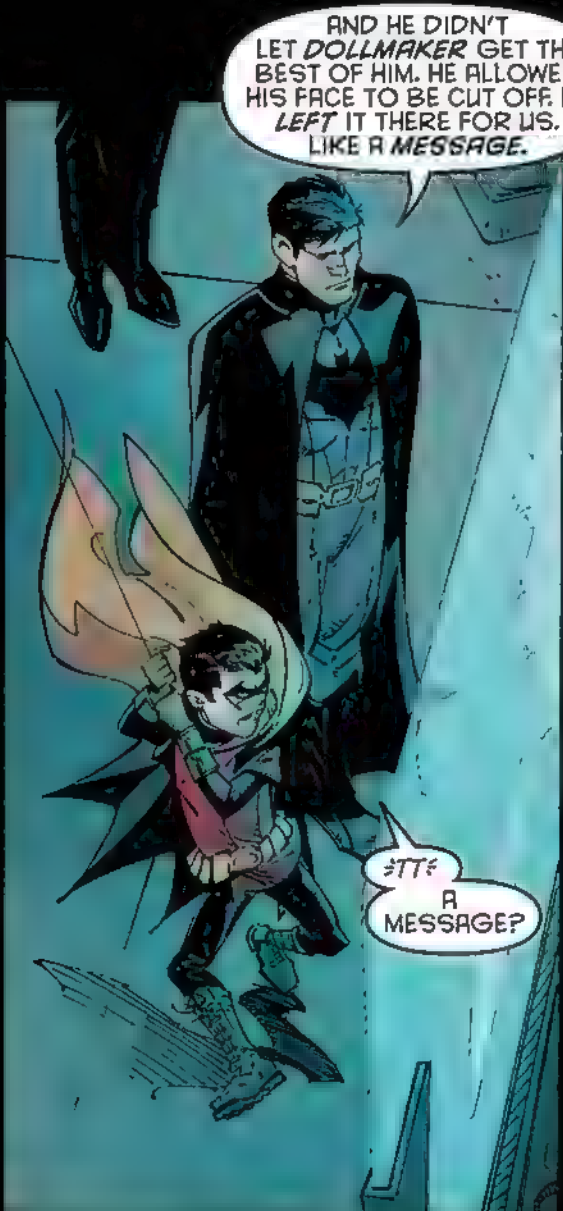
COME ON, PENNYWORTH. MAYBE JOKER *USED* TO BE SOME GREAT ADVERSARY OF MY FATHER'S, BUT HE'S *OVER* NOW.

I MEAN, HE ALLOWED SOME SECOND RATE DR. FRANKENSTEIN TO GET THE BETTER OF HIM AND CUT OFF HIS FACE.

THEN HE SLUNK OFF FOR A YEAR TO LICK HIS WOUNDS AND NOW HE COMES BACK AND STEALS HIS FACE. SO *WHAT?*

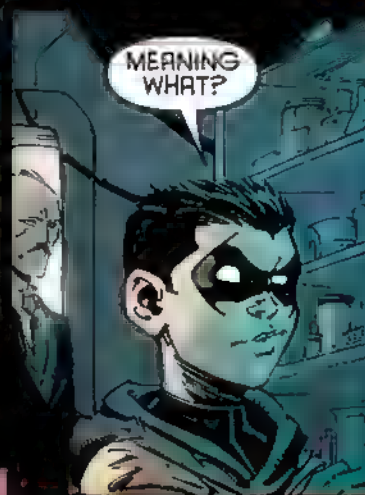


DON'T UNDERESTIMATE HIM, DAMIAN. WHATEVER HE WAS DOING THIS PAST YEAR, IT WASN'T LICKING HIS WOUNDS.



AND HE DIDN'T LET *DOLLMAKER* GET THE BEST OF HIM. HE ALLOWED HIS FACE TO BE CUT OFF. HE *LEFT* IT THERE FOR US. LIKE A *MESSAGE*.

STT? A MESSAGE?



MEANING WHAT?




RIGHT NOW, I'M NOT SURE.

BATMAN, NIGHTWING CALLING IN.



GO AHEAD, NIGHTWING.

IS IT TRUE? HE'S BACK?



IT
SEEMS SO,
YES.

HAVE
YOU TOLD
BATGIRL?

I THOUGHT
SHE MIGHT RATHER
HEAR IT FROM THE
COMMISSIONER.

BATMAN,
RED ROBIN.

SO,
HOW'D HE
DO IT?

HE USED ONE
OF THE G.C.P.D.'S
OWN PULSE GUNS.
REMOVED IT FROM
A SQUAD CAR.

THEY INSTITUTED
THEM A FEW MONTHS
AGO, TO DISABLE CARS
GIVING CHASE. HE STOLE
ONE AND AMPLIFIED IT. PUT
IT UNDER THE DEPARTMENT,
IN THE SEWER,
AIMED UP.

USE
THE POLICE'S
OWN WEAPON
AGAINST THEM.
IT'S ALMOST
FUNNY. AND THE
GENERATOR?

HE BLEW IT
FROM INSIDE.
HOLD ON.

BATMAN,
BATGIRL. WHY
DIDN'T YOU SAY
ANYTHING?



I THOUGHT THE COMMISSIONER--

NO, ABOUT THE COMMISSIONER. WHY DIDN'T YOU TELL ME THAT PIECE OF TRASH CAME AFTER HIM?

LOOK, NEVER MIND. WHAT DO YOU HAVE ON HIM?



NOTHING. HE TOOK THE FACE AND DISAPPEARED.

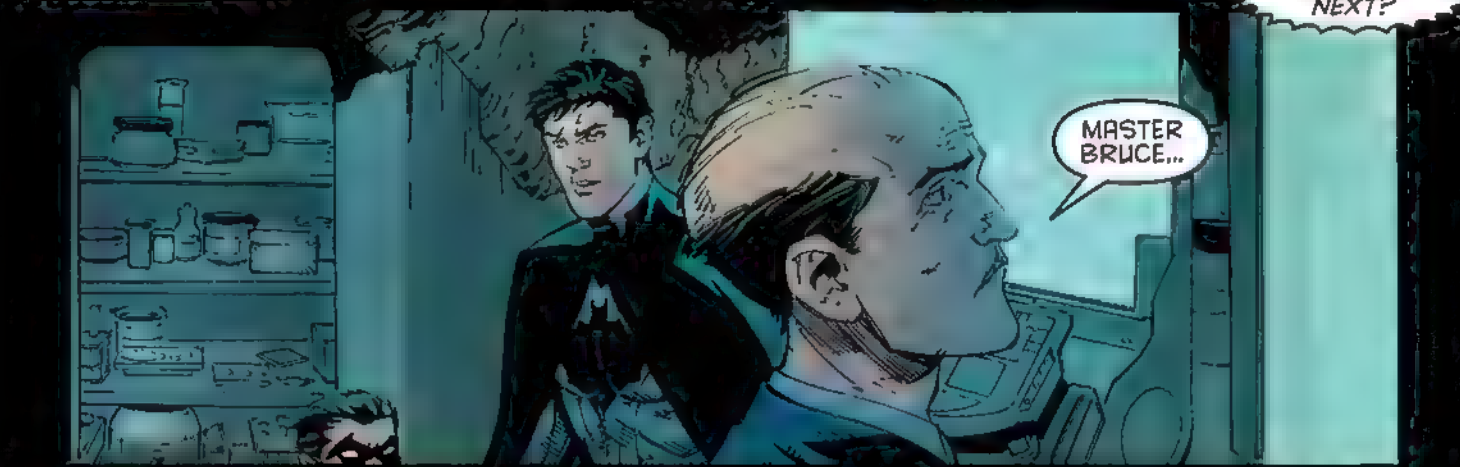
BUT IN THE YEAR SINCE HE DROPPED OFF THE FACE OF THE EARTH...? YOU MUST HAVE SOMETHING.



ALL YEAR I'VE HAD AN EYE OUT FOR ANY SIGN OF HIM. THERE'S BEEN NO TRACE AT ALL.

SO WHERE THE HELL HAS HE BEEN?

AND WHAT DOES HE HAVE PLANNED NEXT?



MASTER BRUCE...



...LOOK...

THIS
IS THE LOCAL
NEWS, SIR.

BATMAN, I'M
HEARING...

I'M SEEING IT.
RUN FACIAL AND VOICE
RECOGNITION.

HELL...HELLO
GOTHAMITES...



IT'S SO
GOOD TO BE
B-BACK.

WHAT,
DON'T YOU
RECOGNIZE
ME?



IT'S
J-JOKER.

I WAS
AW--



"THE ARMS,
MASTER BRUCE."

JOKER'S. IT'S THE
OLD CHILDREN'S GAG."

HEE-HEE.
LOUDER...



...OR THAT
BAD, BAD THING
WE TALKED
ABOUT...

IT'S ME, JOKER!
I WAS AWAY FOR A
LITTLE WHILE, YES, BUT
NOW I'M BACK!



HAHAHA. GOOD,
BUT YOU CAN DO
BETTER! READ FROM
THE PROMPTER.

NOW I'M BACK!
THE CITY WAS CALLING
TO ME, YOU SEE? CALLING
ME BACK TO SERVE. SO HERE
I AM, AND I COME BEARING
NEWS FROM AFARI! AND
THAT NEWS IS THIS:

MAYOR
HADY DIES AT
MIDNIGHT.

THE
JOKER HAS
SPOKEN.



BUT JUST
BECAUSE HE'S MAYOR,
DON'T THINK HE MAY-OR-
MAY-NOT DIE. HE'S DEAD
AS A BABY BIRD SMASHED
WITH A CROWBAR!
MIDNIGHT TONIGHT.
HEE. HEE.

SOMETIMES
I JUST K-K-KILL
ME.



PLEASE--
PLE--



HAHA
HAHAHAHA
HAHA!



THE VOICE RECOGNITION HAS COME THROUGH, SIR.

WHO IS HE?

HE'S **JOHN CLARIDGE**. THE SON OF THE LATE **HENRY CLARIDGE**, THE DIAMOND MAGNATE.

HENRY CLARIDGE WAS ALSO--

THE FIRST PERSON **JOKER** EVER MURDERED IN **GOTHAM**, TO MY KNOWLEDGE. IT WAS THE FIRST TIME HE APPEARED HERE.

HE CAME ON THE TELEVISION, JUST LIKE THAT, AND ANNOUNCED **CLARIDGE** WOULD DIE AT MIDNIGHT.

AND?



AND **JOKER** HAD POISONED HIM TWENTY-FOUR HOURS EARLIER. IT WAS THE FIRST USE OF **JOKER TOXIN** ON RECORD, TOO. ALL OF IT WAS THE FIRST TIME. HE'S REENACTING IT FOR SOME REASON.

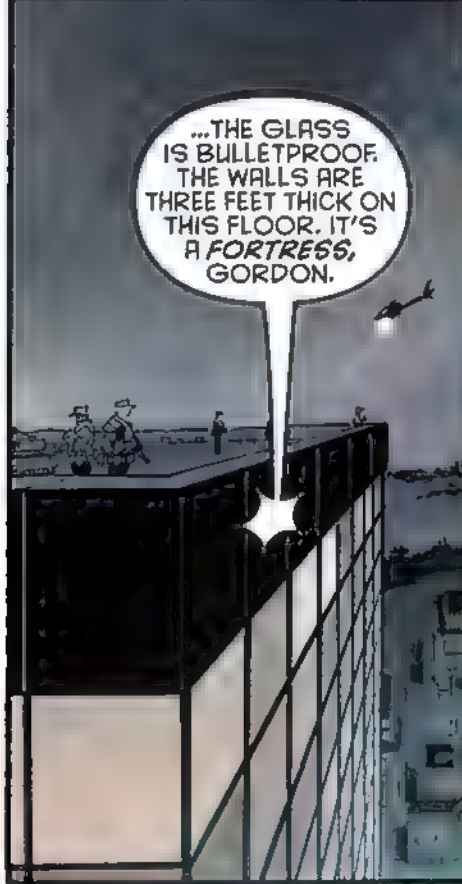
BATMAN, WE CAN HELP ON THIS ONE.

NO. YOU'RE ALL DOING CRUCIAL WORK OF YOUR OWN.

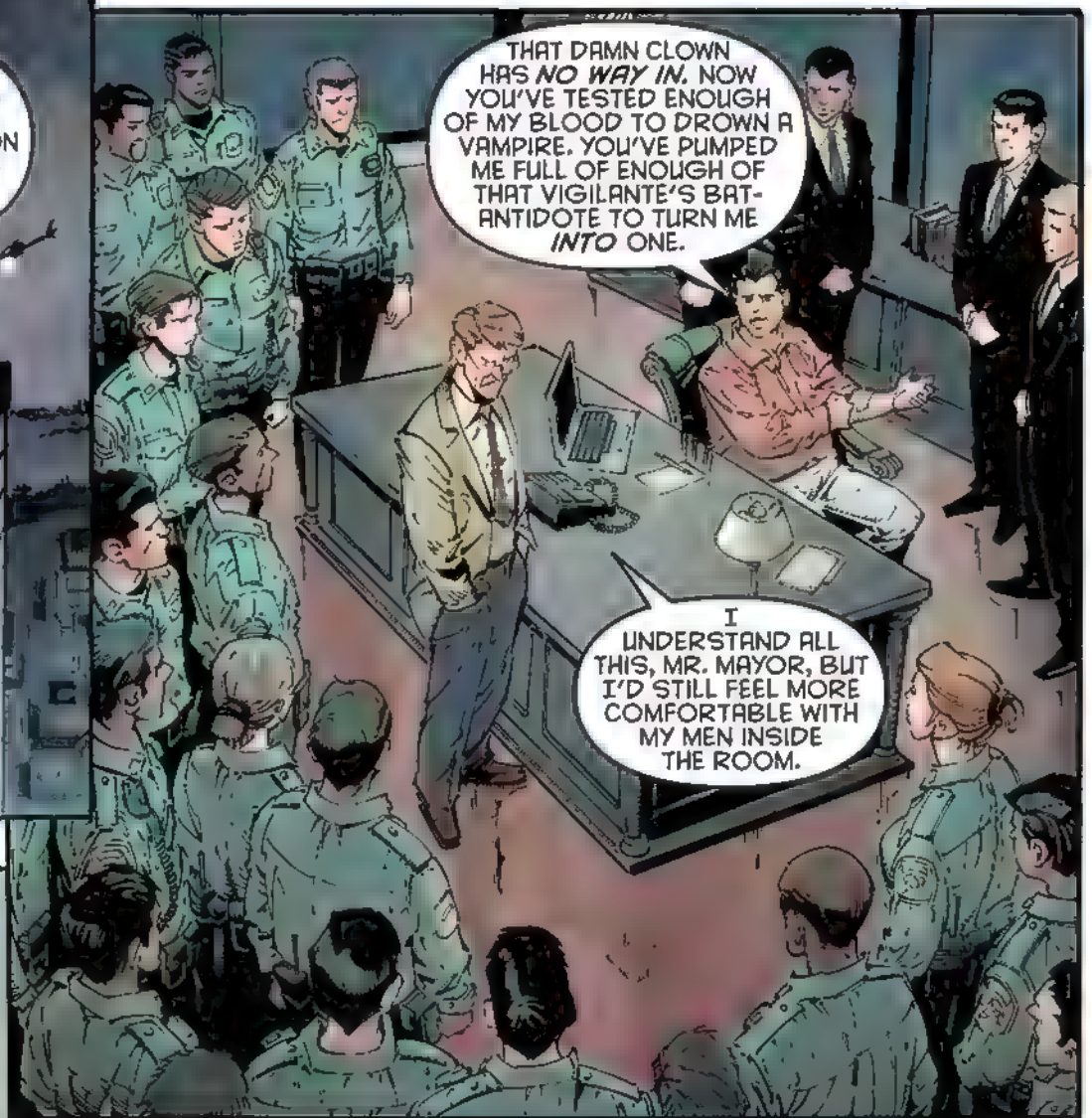
BUT **BATM--**

IT'S ALL RIGHT. THIS IS BETWEEN HIM AND ME.

"THERE'S NO WAY IN. EVERYTHING'S SEALED UP..."



...THE GLASS IS BULLETPROOF. THE WALLS ARE THREE FEET THICK ON THIS FLOOR. IT'S A **FORTRESS**, GORDON.



THAT DAMN CLOWN HAS **NO WAY IN**. NOW YOU'VE TESTED ENOUGH OF MY BLOOD TO DROWN A VAMPIRE. YOU'VE PUMPED ME FULL OF ENOUGH OF THAT VIGILANTE'S BAT-ANTIDOTE TO TURN ME **INTO ONE**.

I UNDERSTAND ALL THIS, MR. MAYOR, BUT I'D STILL FEEL MORE COMFORTABLE WITH MY MEN INSIDE THE ROOM.



FINE. FINE, IF IT MAKES YOU **FEEL BETTER**, BUT KEEP THEM ON THAT SIDE AT LEAST, WILL YOU? THE SOLES OF YOUR STANDARD ISSUES SCUFF UP THE FLOOR. I JUST HAD IT CLEANED LAST WEEK.

SOLES. GOT IT. I'LL RE-CHECK THE ELEVATORS.



EVENING.






EVENING,
JIM.

I'M AFRAID
TO ASK HOW LONG
YOU'VE HAD EYES
ON THE MAYOR'S
PLACE.

THEN
DON'T.


ANYTHING?



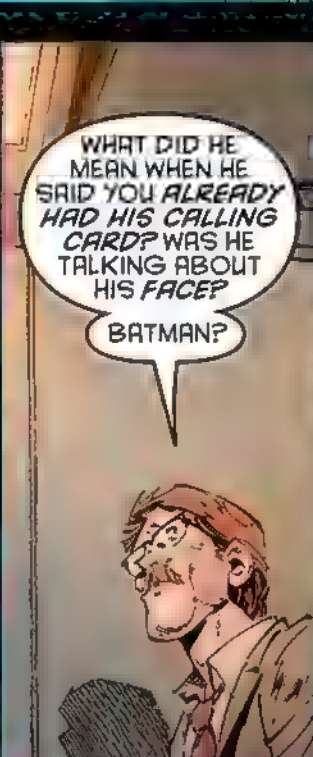
MAYOR HADY'S
BLOOD IS CLEAN. HIS
SIGNS ARE NORMAL.
THE WATER'S CLEAN.
VENTS ARE CLEAN.
SECURITY'S UP.

SO, NO.
NOTHING. HOW
ARE YOU?

TERRIBLE...




...BUT I
IMAGINE YOU
CAN SEE
THAT.

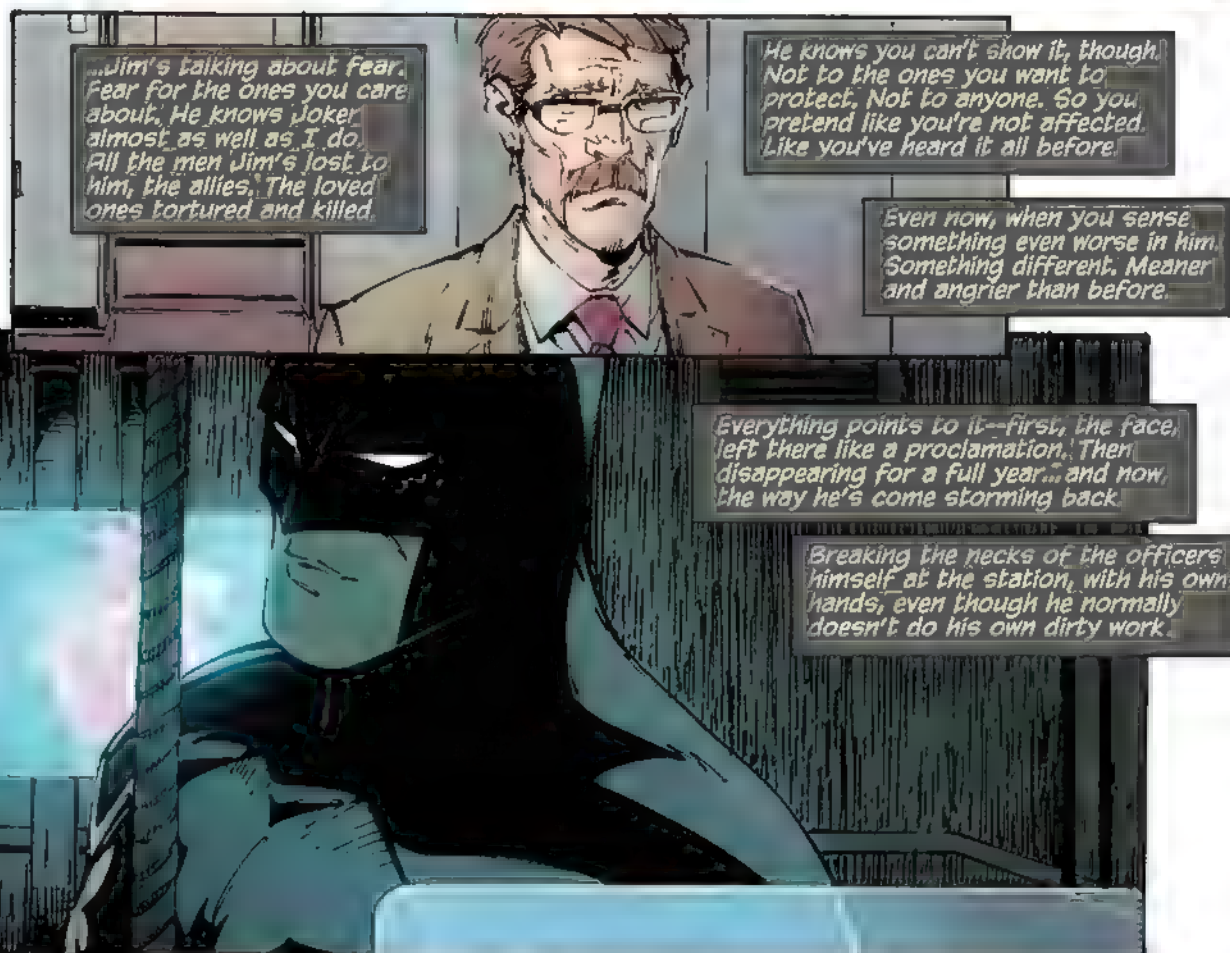
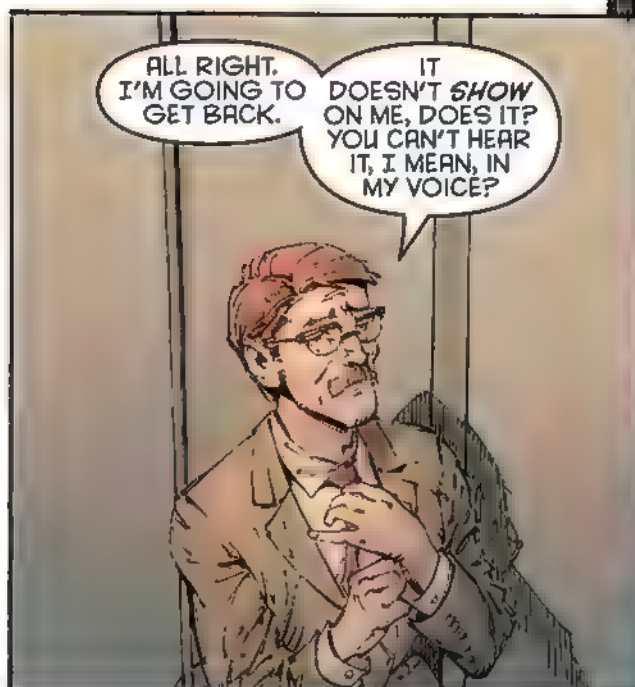


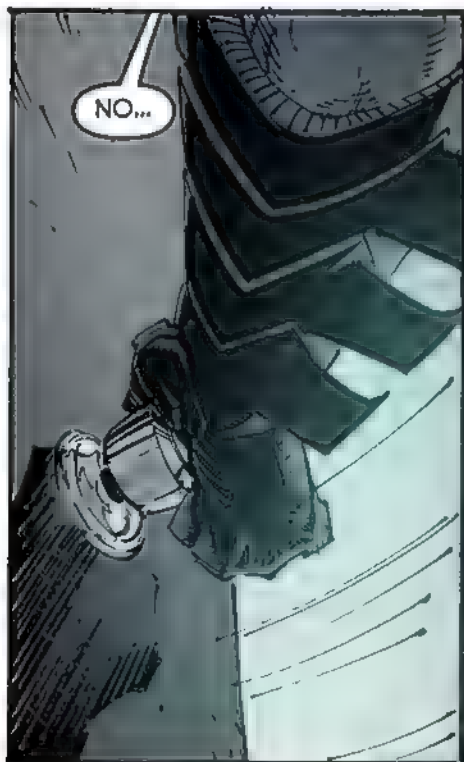
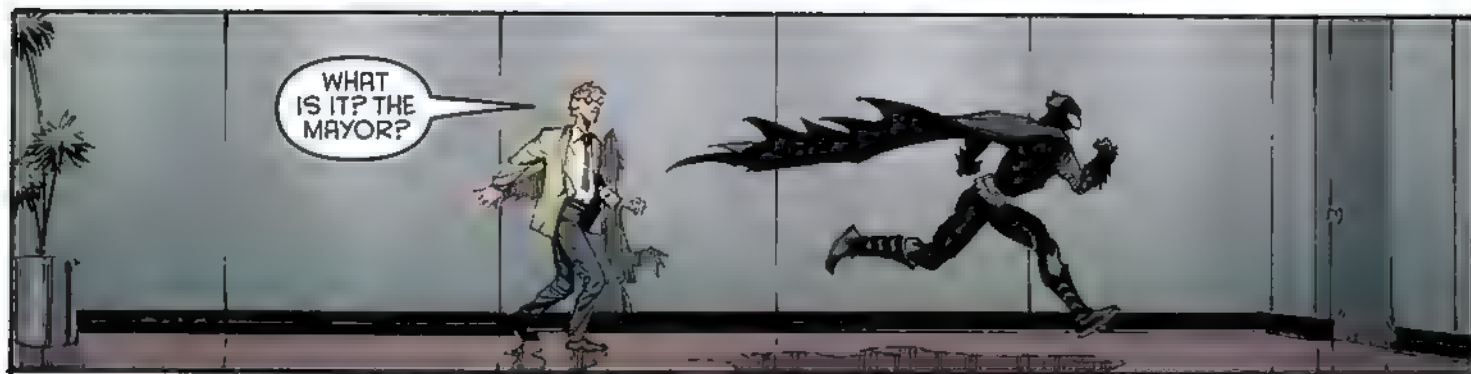
WHAT DID HE
MEAN WHEN HE
SAID YOU *ALREADY*
HAD HIS CALLING
CARD? WAS HE
TALKING ABOUT
HIS *FACE*?

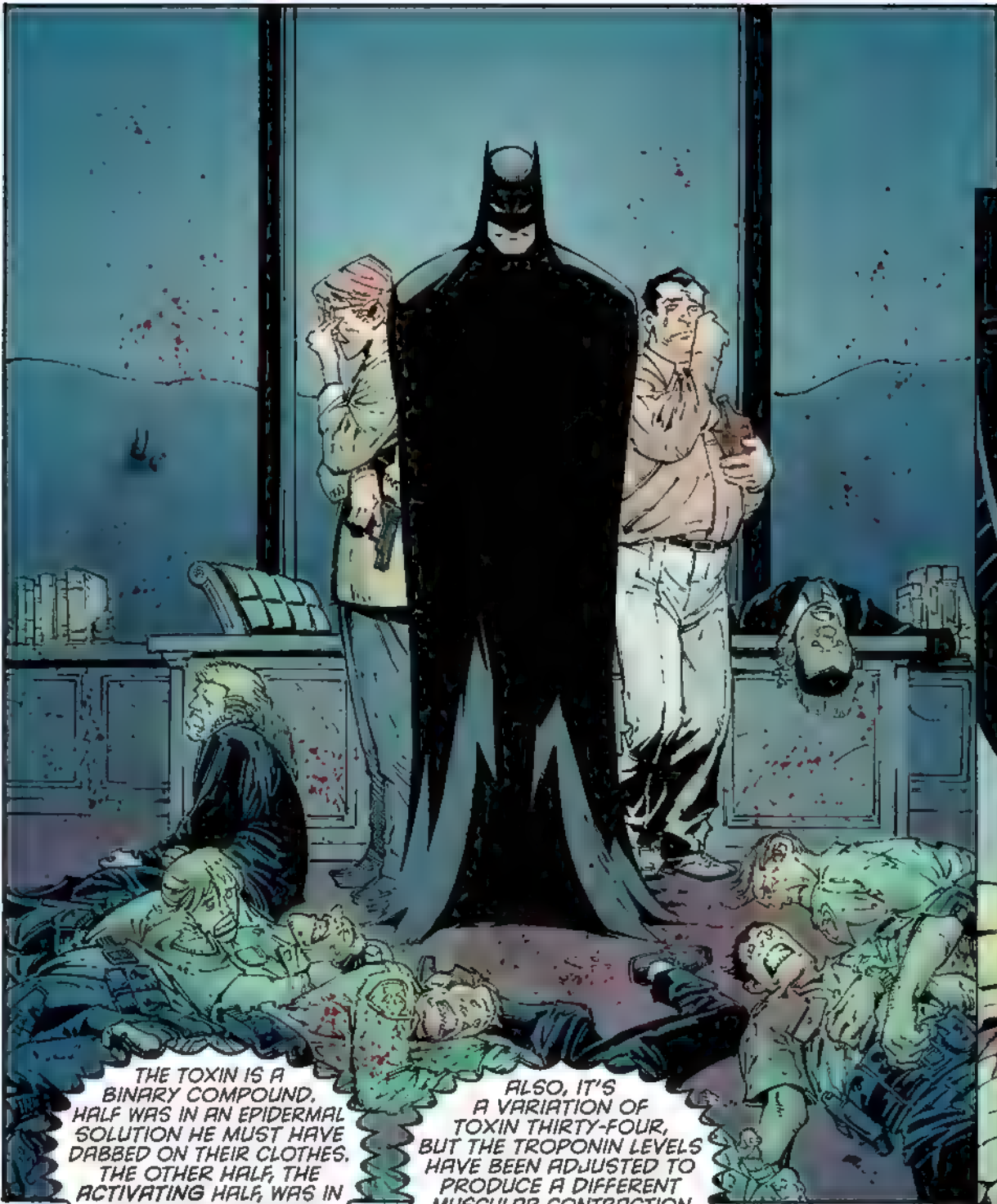
BATMAN?



I DON'T
KNOW, JIM.







SENDING
SAMPLES OF
TOXIN.

THE TOXIN IS A
BINARY COMPOUND.
HALF WAS IN AN EPIDERMAL
SOLUTION HE MUST HAVE
DABBED ON THEIR CLOTHES.
THE OTHER HALF, THE
ACTIVATING HALF, WAS IN
THE FLOOR CLEANER
THE MAYOR USED.

ALSO, IT'S
A VARIATION OF
TOXIN THIRTY-FOUR,
BUT THE TROPONIN LEVELS
HAVE BEEN ADJUSTED TO
PRODUCE A DIFFERENT
MUSCULAR CONTRACTION
IN THE FACIAL MUSCLES
RESULTING IN--

A FROWN.
I KNOW. GIVE ME
SOMETHING ELSE.
ANYTHING.

IT'S LIKELY
NOTHING, BUT THE
COMPUTER IS FINDING THREE
NON-ESSENTIAL COMPONENTS
TO THE COMPOUND. THREE
SUBSTANCES THAT SEEM TO
SIMPLY BE ADDITIVES, NOTHING
FUNCTIONAL. CHLORINE,
ETHANE AND COMMON
ASPIRIN.

THE FIRST
LETTERS. HE'S
TAKING IT BACK
TO WHERE IT ALL
STARTED...

SIR?



I THOUGHT
THIS WOULD BE THE
PERFECT PLACE FOR
IT ALL TO START
AGAIN.

THIS
FACTORY. THIS
ROOM. THESE
VATS.

WHERE YOU
KNOCKED ME OFF
THIS VERY CATWALK AND
BATHED ME IN FIRE AND
BURNED AWAY MY
FALSE SKIN.

WHERE
YOU SHOWED ME
THE SKIN BENEATH
MY SKIN.

BRINGS BACK
MEMORIES, NO?
LITTLE TRIP DOWN
MEMORY LANE.

THE TRIP
ENDS HERE,
JOKER.

HAHAHAHA!
OH, HOW I'VE
MISSED YOU,
BATSSSS. HOW
I STILL MISS
YOU.

THE REAL YOU. THE ONE
UNDERNEATHHH...

IT'S WHY
I LEFT, YOU
KNOW.

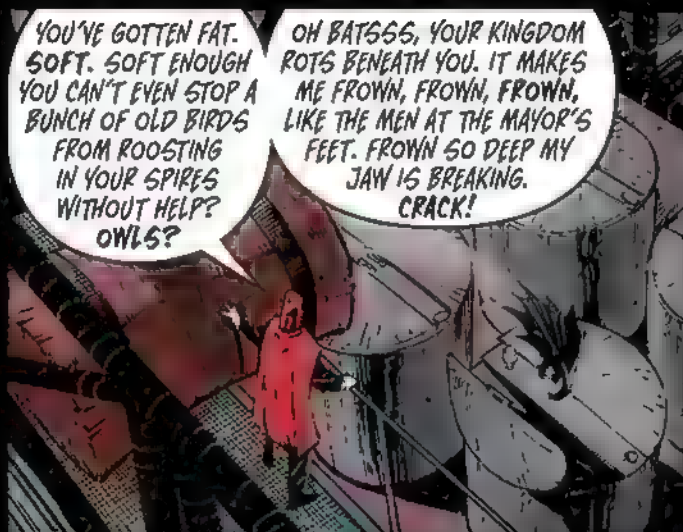
I COULDN'T
STAND IT ANYMORE.
MISSING YOU. BUT I'M
HERE NOW, RAPPING AT YOUR
WINDOW. LOOKING FOR YOU,
MY SHADOW. TELLING YOU
TO COME OUT AND PLAY.
SO WILL YOU?

WILL YOU
PLAY WITH ME LIKE
OLD TIMES?

YOU'RE
NOT HIM.
WHERE IS
HE?!



TOO SLOW,
OLD FRIEND. HAHHAHA!
TOO SLOW TO SAVE THE
POLICEMEN. TOO SLOW TO
SAVE THE MAYOR'S MEN!
AND TOO SLOW TO
PLAY WITH ME!



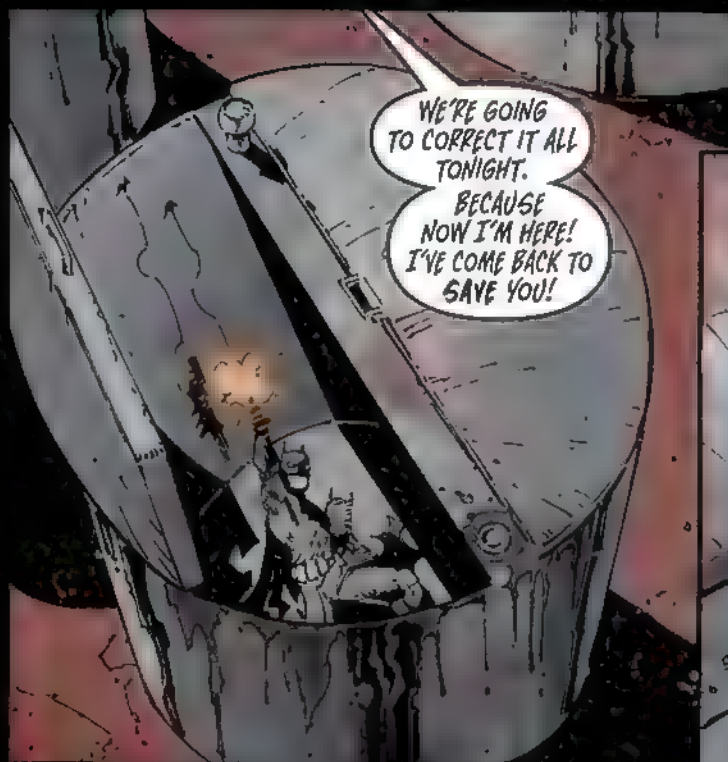
YOU'VE GOTTEN FAT.
SOFT. SOFT ENOUGH
YOU CAN'T EVEN STOP A
BUNCH OF OLD BIRDS
FROM ROOSTING
IN YOUR SPIRES
WITHOUT HELP?
OWLS?

OH BATSSS, YOUR KINGDOM
ROTS BENEATH YOU. IT MAKES
ME FROWN, FROWN, FROWN.
LIKE THE MEN AT THE MAYOR'S
FEET. FROWN SO DEEP MY
JAW IS BREAKING.
CRACK!

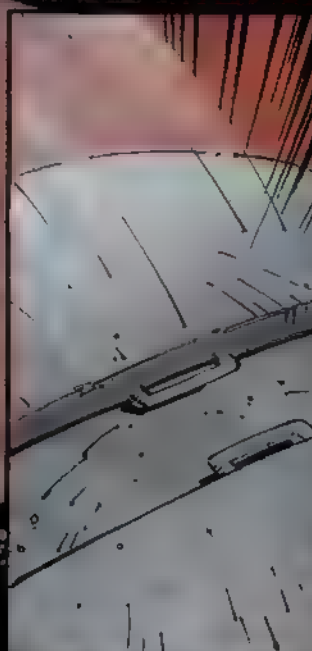


I LOOK AT YOU
AND I WANT TO KNOCK
ON YOUR SKULL AND ASK
"WHO'S IN THERE? WHO
IS THIS? WHERE'S MY
OLD FRIEND?"

SIGH...
BUT DON'T
WORRY!



WE'RE GOING
TO CORRECT IT ALL
TONIGHT.
BECAUSE
NOW I'M HERE!
I'VE COME BACK TO
SAVE YOU!



SAVE YOU
FROM THE ONES
YOU CALL YOUR
ALLIES. YOUR TABLE.
THE ONES WHO MAKE
YOU SLOW. THE ONES
WHO MAKE YOU
WEAK.

I'M
HERE TO TAKE
THEM DOWN, ONE
BY ONE...



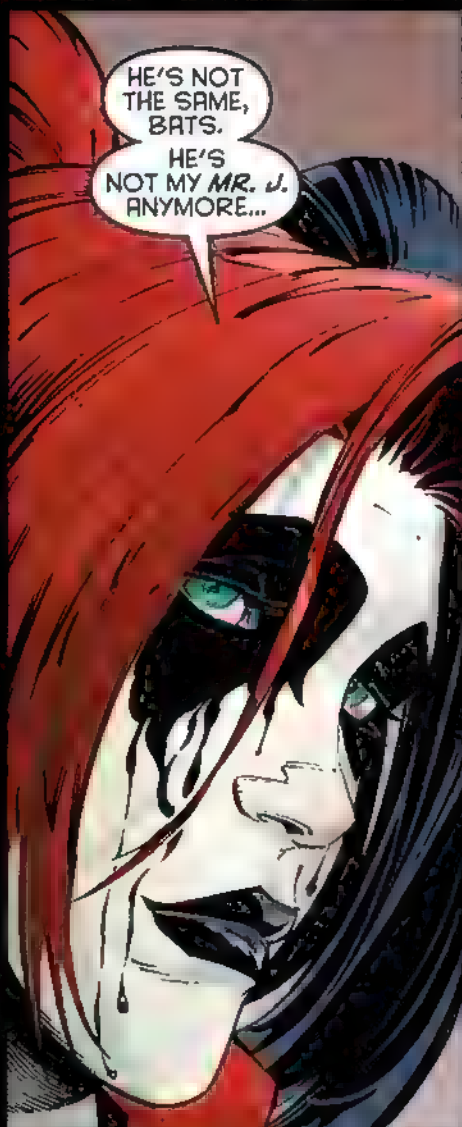
...SO
THAT YOU MAY
BE REBORN AS
THE BAT-MAN
THIS CITY
DESERVES!



REBORN
IN GLORY! HOPE
YOU BROUGHT YOUR
SWIM TRUNKS!
HAHAHAHAHA!



HARLEY!
I KNOW YOU'RE
UP THERE!



HE'S NOT
THE SAME,
BATS.
HE'S
NOT MY MR. J.
ANYMORE...



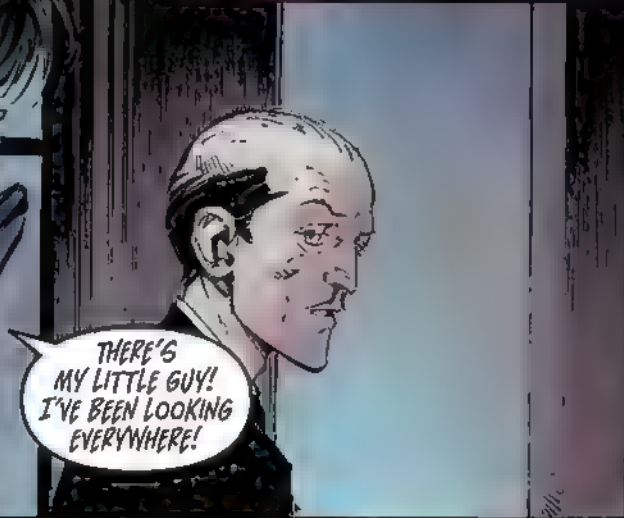
...AND WHAT
HE'S GOING TO DO
TO YOU...HIS PLAN...
I CAN'T...

WHERE IS HE,
HARLEY?!



TELL
ME!

WHERE IS
JOKERPI?



DC COMICS presents BATMAN in **DEATH OF THE FAMILY**

KNOCK KNOCK

NOW,
MR. PENNYWORTH,
STOP ME IF
YOU'VE HEARD
THIS ONE!

HA
HAHAHA
HAHA!

Brought to you by
SCOTT SNYDER
GREG CAPULLO
JONATHAN GLAPION


FEO PLASCENCIA
RICHARD STARKINGS
and **COMICRAFT'S**
JIMMY BETANCOURT
KATIE KUBERT
MIKE MARTS

Cover by
CAPULLO and
PLASCENCIA

Variant cover by
AARON KUDER and
NATHAN FAIRBAIRN

BATMAN
created by
BOB KANE

NEXT:
The **JOKE'S** on
GOTHAM!



ARE YOU
STILL OUT
THERE?

CLINK

YES. I'M HERE.
I'M ALWAYS
HERE.

I'VE
MISSED YOU,
YOU KNOW? IT'S
BEEN OVER A
YEAR...

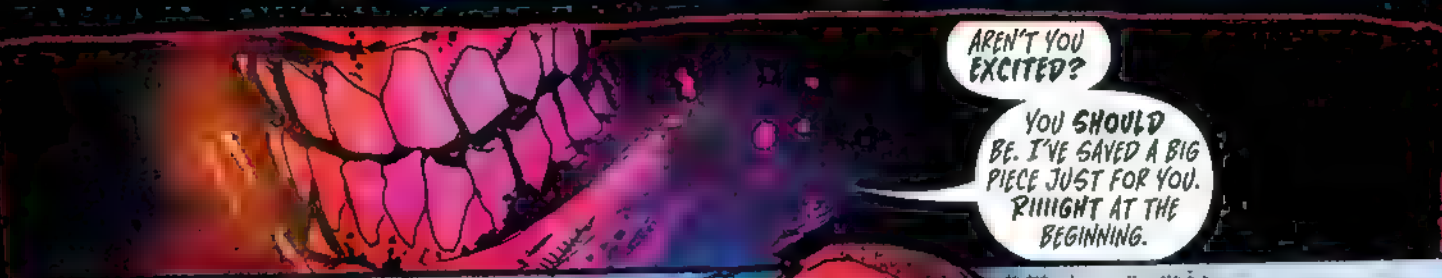
...BUT I
CAN'T SEE YOU...
COME INTO THE
LIGHT.



WHERE--


NOT TO WORRY.
I'M RIGHT HEEERE.
RIGHT BESIDE
YOU.

JUST GETTING
READY FOR THE FUN
TO BEGIN...



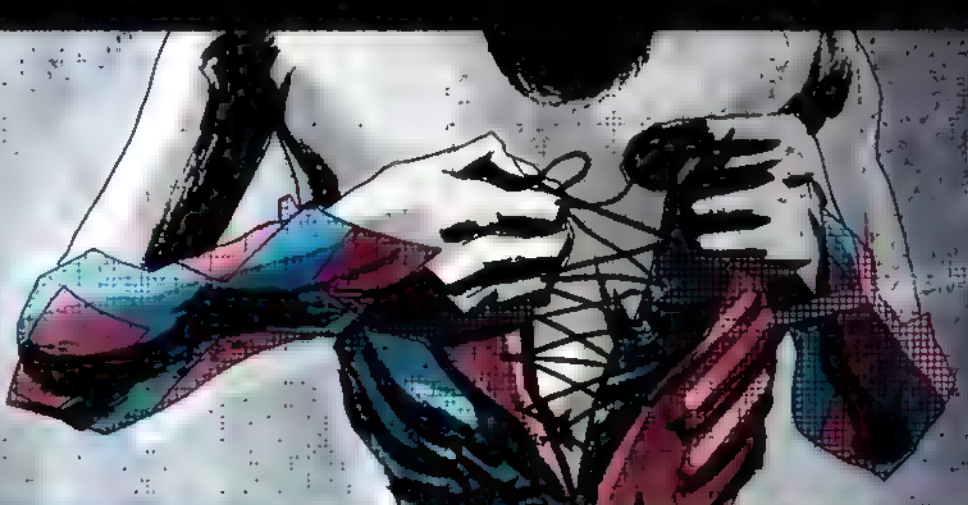
AREN'T YOU
EXCITED?

YOU SHOULD
BE. I'VE SAVED A BIG
PIECE JUST FOR YOU.
RIGHT AT THE
BEGINNING.




WHAT DO
YOU WANT ME
TO DO?

TAKE OFF YOUR
CLOTHES.



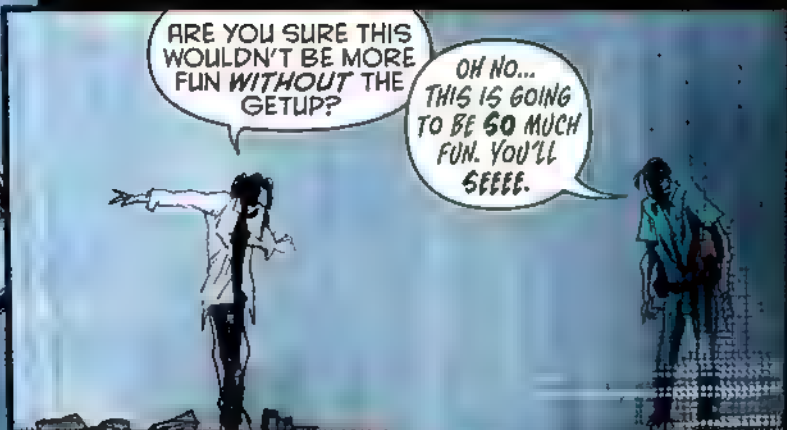
WHAT SHOULD I DO NEXT, MR. J?



MR. JP WHERE ARE YOU?




PUT THESE ON.



ARE YOU SURE THIS WOULDN'T BE MORE FUN WITHOUT THE GETUP?

OH NO... THIS IS GOING TO BE SO MUCH FUN. YOU'LL SEE.




THE PADDING IN HERE IS PRETTY INTENSE, MR. J.

IT CERTAINLY IS!




AND THE PLATFORMS ON THESE SHOES... I'LL BE YOUR HEIGHT... HAVE YOUR BUILD. I'LL LOOK JUST LIKE YOU.

YESSSS... THAT'S THE IDEA!



JUST.
LIKE ME.




JUST HOW IT'S
SUPPOSED TO BE! THERE'S
JUST ONE THING MISSING.

THAT PRETTY FACE
OF YOURS...IT **SPOILS** THE
REFLECTION. I'M AFRAID IT'S
GOING TO HAVE TO GO.



I...I DON'T
UNDERSTAND...

YOU WERE
ALWAYS MY PERFECT
LITTLE MONSTER,
HARLEY.




I PULLED THE
PIECES OF YOU FROM MY
RIBCAGE AND STITCHED
YOU BACK TOGETHER WITH
BEAUTIFUL LIES.

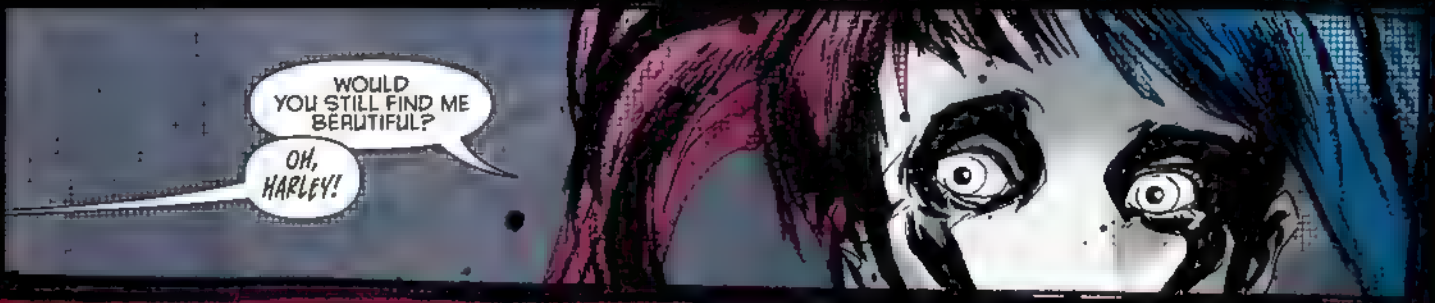
I SMASHED
YOUR NORMAL BRAIN ON
THE GROUND AND REPLACED
IT WITH SOMETHING
MAGNIFICENTLY
ABNORMAL!

YOU ARE
MY CREATION, AND IF
YOU WANT TO SERVE ME
I NEED YOU TO BE...
PERFECT.

I...I DON'T
THINK I CAN
DO THIS,
MR. J.



OH, BUT THINK OF
ALL THE FUN WE'LL
HAVE TOGETHER IF
YOU DO!

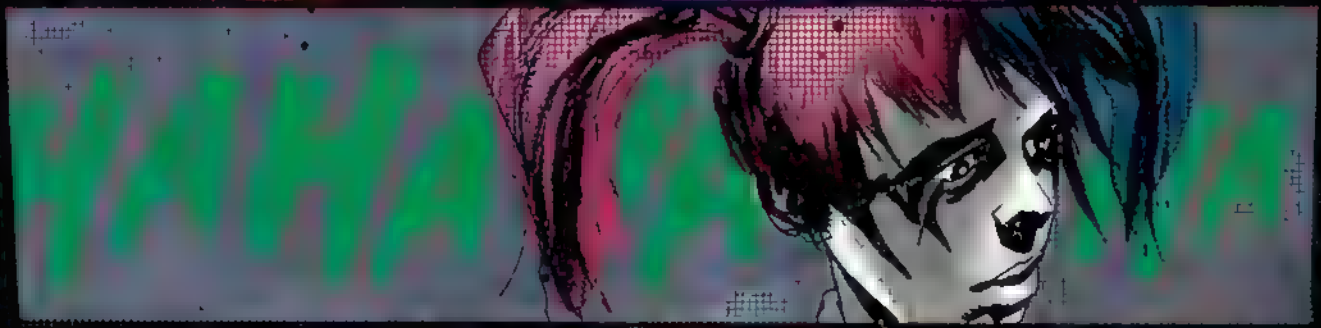


WOULD YOU STILL FIND ME BEAUTIFUL?

OH, HARLEY!

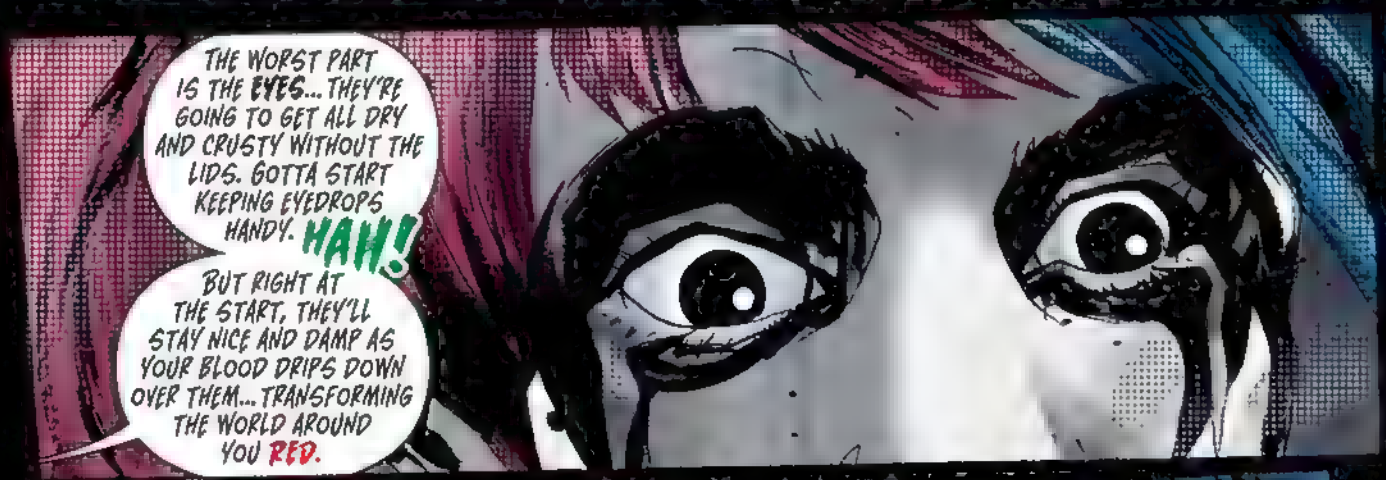


WHEN DID I EVER SAY I FOUND YOU BEAUTIFUL?



WOULD IT HURT?

TREMENDOUSLY. MORE THAN ANYTHING HAS EVER HURT IN YOUR LIFE!



THE WORST PART IS THE EYES... THEY'RE GOING TO GET ALL DRY AND CRUSTY WITHOUT THE LIDS. GOTTA START KEEPING EYEDROPS HANDY. **HAW!**

BUT RIGHT AT THE START, THEY'LL STAY NICE AND DAMP AS YOUR BLOOD DRIPS DOWN OVER THEM... TRANSFORMING THE WORLD AROUND YOU **RED.**



BETTER CLOSE THEM NOW, WHILE YOU'VE GOT THE CHANCE.

NO... I DON'T WANT THIS... I'M NOT READY!



SHLINK

THERE...

...IT'S
DONE.

BUT...I
DIDN'T FEEL
ANYTHING...

...YOU SAID
IT WAS GOING
TO HURT.

HEHEH...GOT YOU GOOD,
DIDN'T I?

YOURS IS
STILL ON.

WHEN HE
COMES, YOU RUN
UNTIL HE'S IN FRONT
OF THE HAMMER. THEN
YOU
ACTIVATE IT.

SHOULDN'T BE
LONG NOW...HAVE
FUUN...

TEASE

STARRING
THE JOKER &
HARLEY QUINN

SCOTT
SNYDER &
JAMES
TYNION IV
WRITERS
JOCK
ARTWORK
SAL
CIPRIANO
LETTERS
KATIE
KUBERT
ASSISTANT
EDITOR
MIKE
MARTS
EDITOR

MR. JP?
ARE YOU
STILL OUT
THERE?



END

Rainbows.

I might
be dying.

And I'm actually
seeing rainbows.

I'm sure there's
a neurological
reason for it.

But I can't think
of what it might
be just now.

I WON'T
APOLOGIZE.

THE TAR
PITS DON'T
APOLOGIZE TO
DINOSAURS.

YOUR
PEOPLE HAVE
BEEN RUNNING
GOTHAM FOR
YEARS.

YOU'VE
LET THIS
CITY CHOKE
TO DEATH
SLOWLY.

And above
me, my target.

The woman who
wants to run
Gotham like a
train set.

YOU LET
THIS HAPPEN,
BATGIRL.

The woman who tortures
and murders criminals to
set an "example."

The woman who just
stuck a knife in me.

YOU
LET THIS
CITY
ROT.

A BLADE OF MEMORY

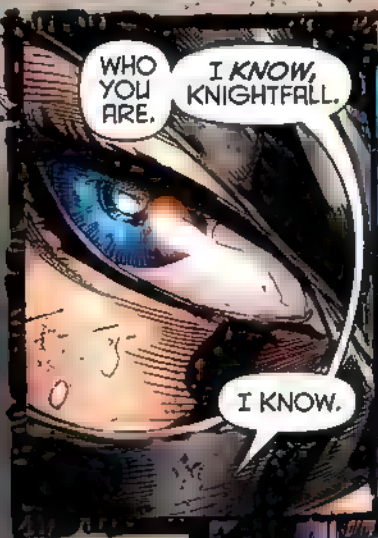
CALL SHARPE: 800-451-7262
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...
YOU'RE
YOUNGER THAN
I THOUGHT.

AROUND
MY AGE. I
DIDN'T EXPECT
THAT.



WHO
YOU
ARE.

I KNOW,
KNIGHTFALL.

I KNOW.

I'M
SURE.

BUT WHAT
DIFFERENCE DOES
THAT MAKE NOW,
REALLY?

IS THERE
ANYONE YOU
WANT ME TO
NOTIFY?

OF YOUR
DEATH. DO I
CALL ANYONE?

*Well, that's nice. A
considerate murderer.*



THANKS.

I'M
FINE.



CLEARLY.

DON'T THINK
YOU KNOW WHAT'S
UNDER HERE JUST
BECAUSE YOU
KNOW MY NAME.



YOU DON'T
WANT TO LOOK
INTO MY EYES,
BATGIRL.

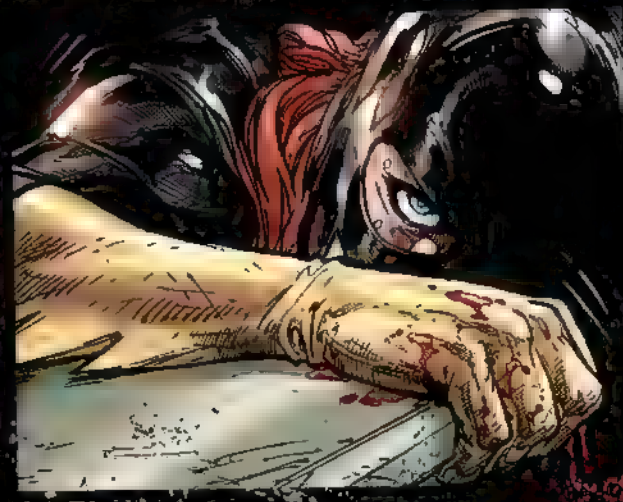
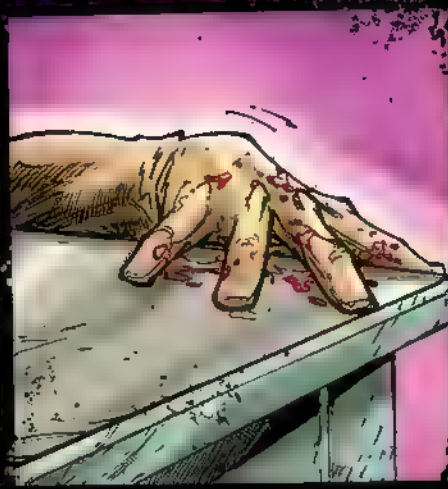


BONEBREAKER.
SHE'S GONE. COME
COLLECT HER.

BONEBREAKER?
COME IN, PLEASE.



SALLY?
COME IN,
PLEASE.



KNIGHTFALL?

...?



I
WASN'T DONE
TALKING
YET!

GUH.

OH, I'M
SORRY.

WAS THERE
SOMEONE YOU
WANTED ME TO
NOTIFY?

CAN I
CALL SOMEONE
FOR YOU?



I'm
tuffing.
Mostly.

I've got some
in the tank still.
A little bit, maybe.
Hopefully.

But she's
still fresh and
dangerous.

So be
fast,
Batgirl.

Be mean
and be fast.

GKK.

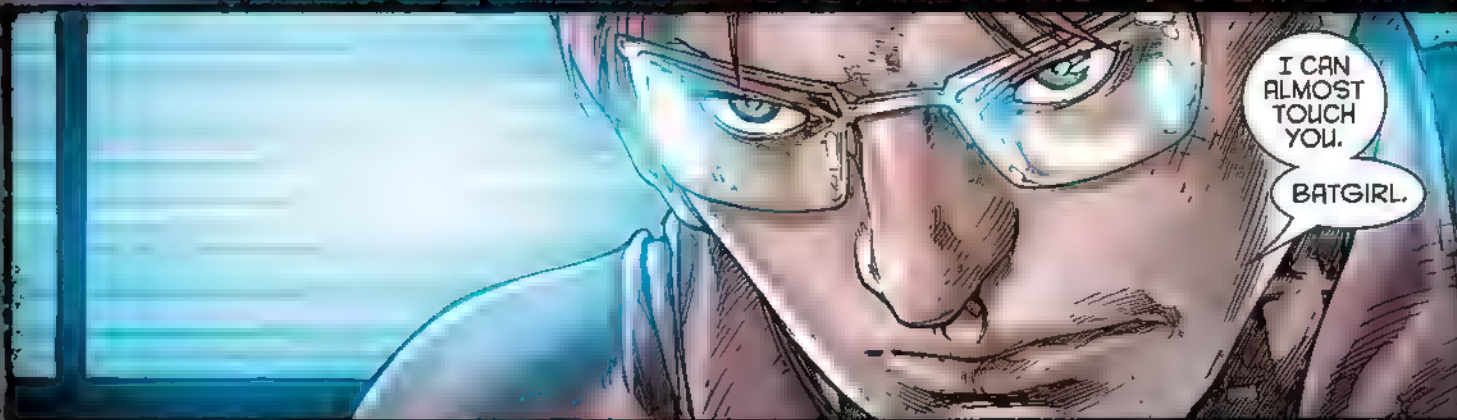
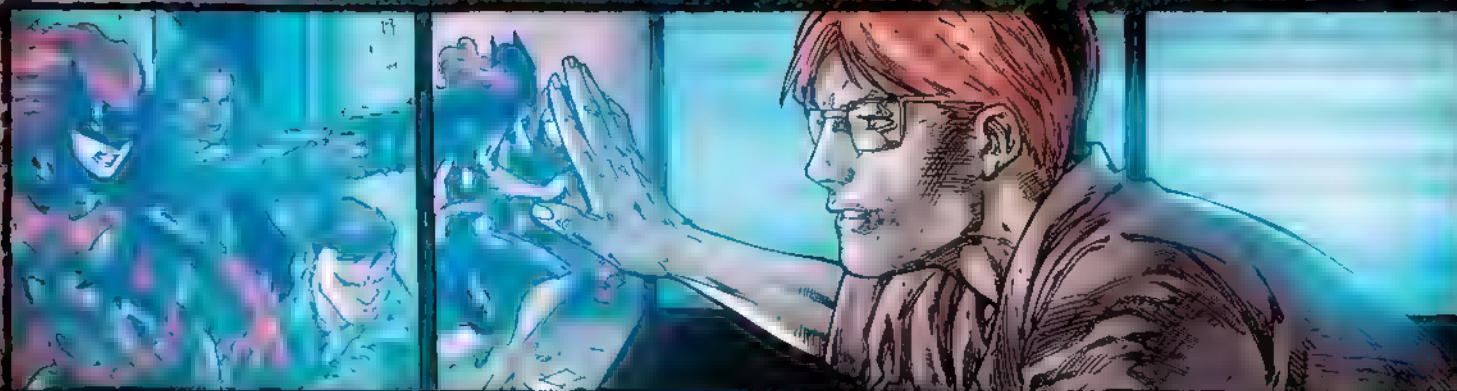
Okay.

I could have
possibly had a
plan, I guess.

GET
OFF
ME.

DON'T
TOUCH
ME.

GET
OFF!



I CAN
ALMOST
TOUCH
YOU.

BATGIRL.



I NOTICE
YOUR CREEPY LITTLE
BODYGUARDS
AREN'T ANSWERING
YOUR CALLS,
KNIGHTFALL.

I BET
MY FRIENDS
HAD SOMETHING
TO DO WITH
THAT, WHAT DO
YOU THINK?

OKAY.

YOU WANT
TO SEE BEHIND
THE MASK,
BATGIRL?

SO
BE IT.

YOU
KNOW WHO
MY FATHER
WAS.

KENNETH
CARNES, THE REAL
ESTATE BARON.
GOTHAM'S LAST
KINGMAKER.

WE WERE
PRACTICALLY
ROYALTY.

"I'M NOT NAIVE. MY FATHER
BUILT EVERYTHING HE HAD WITH
BRIBES AND MUSCLE. NO ONE
BECAME A JUDGE IN GOTHAM
WITHOUT HIS SAY-SO, AND THEY
ALL OWED HIM.

"AND I WANTED HIM
TO BE PROUD. I NEVER
GAVE UP ON ANYTHING.

"HE WAS ALL I
CARED ABOUT.
I DIDN'T CARE
ABOUT BOYS--
WHO COULD
COMPETE WITH
MY DAD?

"I DID FIND
SOMEONE
THOUGH--
TREVOR.

"BUT HE WAS
MY FATHER.

"THE FIRST BOY WHO
DIDN'T CARE ABOUT
MY FAMILY'S MONEY,
HE SAID. HE SAID IT
WOULD ONLY BRING
ME UNHAPPINESS."

"HE WAS RIGHT."

"HE SHOWED UP ONE NIGHT WITH *KNIVES*."

"HE MADE ME CALL MY FAMILY DOWN. MADE ME USE HIS DUCT TAPE TO BIND THEM, MY PARENTS AND MY LITTLE BROTHER."

"MADE ME WATCH HIM TAKE THEIR SKIN."

"IT TOOK THREE HOURS, SAID HE DID IT FOR THE *LULZ*."

IF THAT'S TRUE, CHARISE, WHY DIDN'T YOU BRING IT UP AT THE TRIAL?

BECAUSE I HAD A REVELATION, BATGIRL. SITTING IN MY FAMILY'S BLOOD. A BAPTISM.

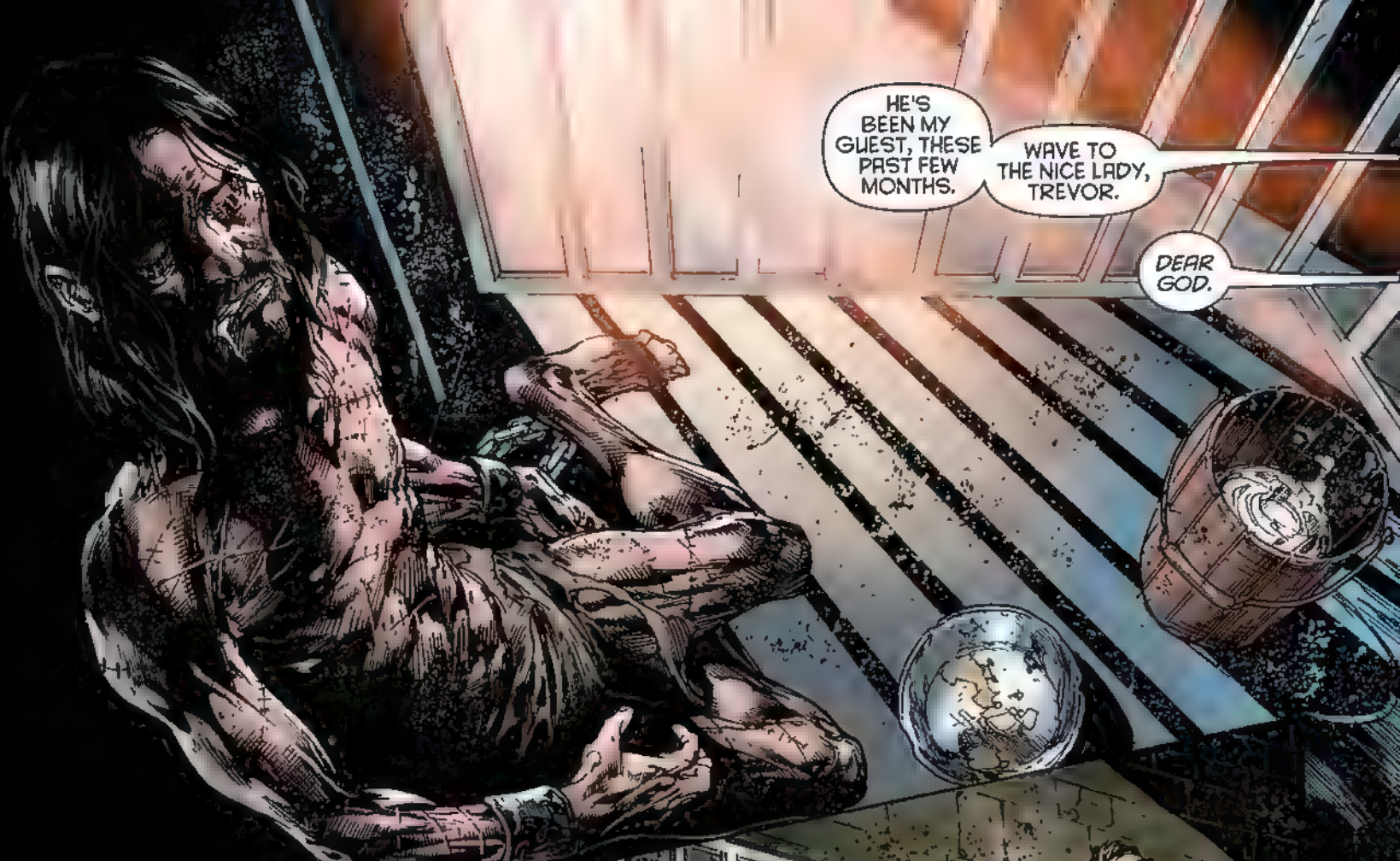
"I COULD NEVER MAKE DEAR TREVOR FACE WHAT HE HAD DONE, IF HE WERE IN PRISON."

"NEVER MAKE HIM COMPREHEND."

WHAT DID YOU DO, KNIGHTFALL?

WHERE IS TREVOR NOW?

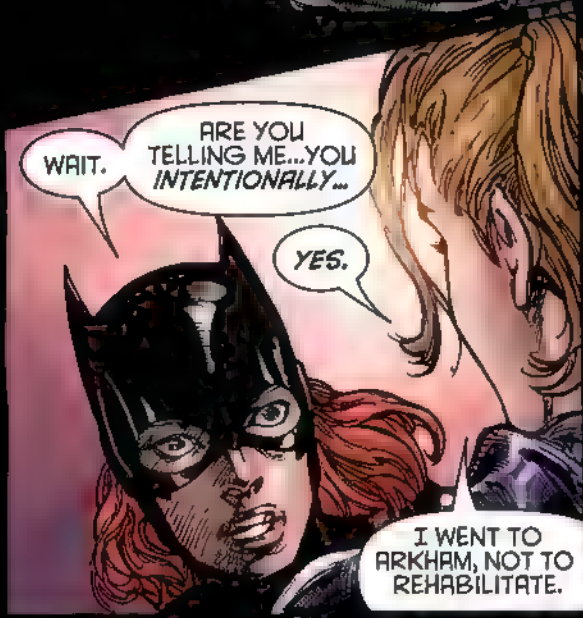
OH, YOU MET HIM ONCE ALREADY.



HE'S BEEN MY GUEST, THESE PAST FEW MONTHS.

WAVE TO THE NICE LADY, TREVOR.

DEAR GOD.



WAIT. ARE YOU TELLING ME...YOU INTENTIONALLY...

YES.

I WENT TO ARKHAM, NOT TO REHABILITATE.



"I WENT THERE TO LEARN."



EVERY KILLER, EVERY SADIST.

I LEARNED THE CRAFT OF MADNESS.

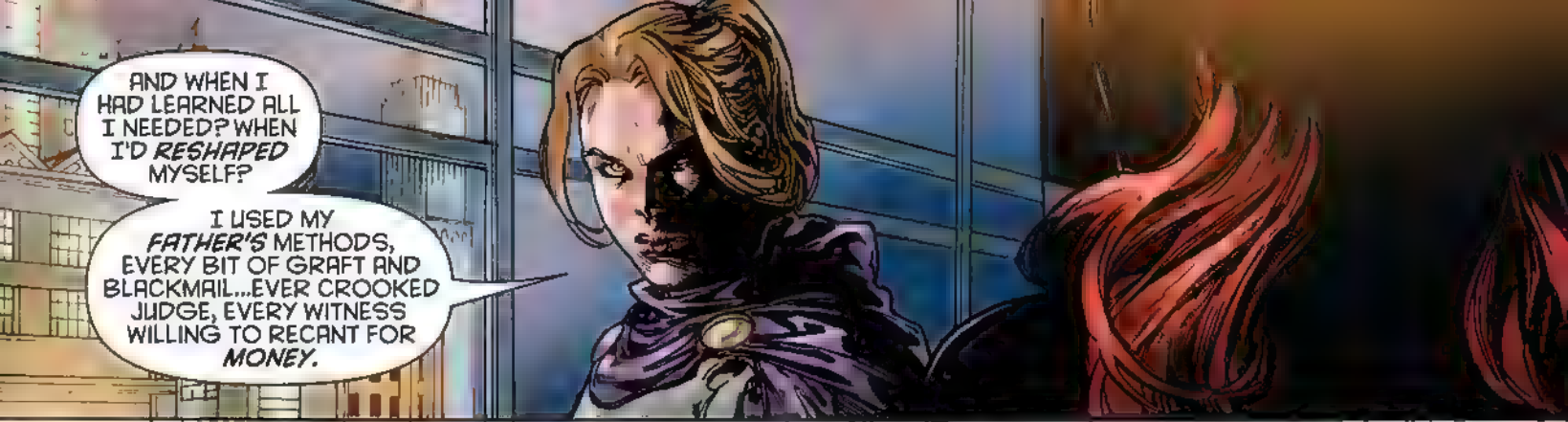
AND DO YOU KNOW WHAT ELSE I LEARNED, BATGIRL?



ARKHAM ISN'T BEHIND A WALLED FORTRESS ANYMORE.

IT'S SPILLED OUT.

IT'S OUT THERE.



AND WHEN I HAD LEARNED ALL I NEEDED? WHEN I'D **RESHAPED** MYSELF?

I USED MY **FATHER'S** METHODS, EVERY BIT OF **GRAFT** AND **BLACKMAIL**...EVER CROOKED **JUDGE**, EVERY **WITNESS** WILLING TO **RECENT** FOR **MONEY**.



AND I WALKED OUT OF THAT DARK PLACE A FREE WOMAN.

MY MURDERED FATHER'S DAUGHTER.

GOTHAM'S ONLY PRINCESS.



AND I WILL RULE THE CITY AND FIX WHAT CIVILIZATION **CAN'T**.

She...she's disconnected.



But I can sure as hell save someone.

I can use her.

WHAT ARE YOU DOING?

YOU KNOW WHAT I'M DOING. I'M LEAVING.

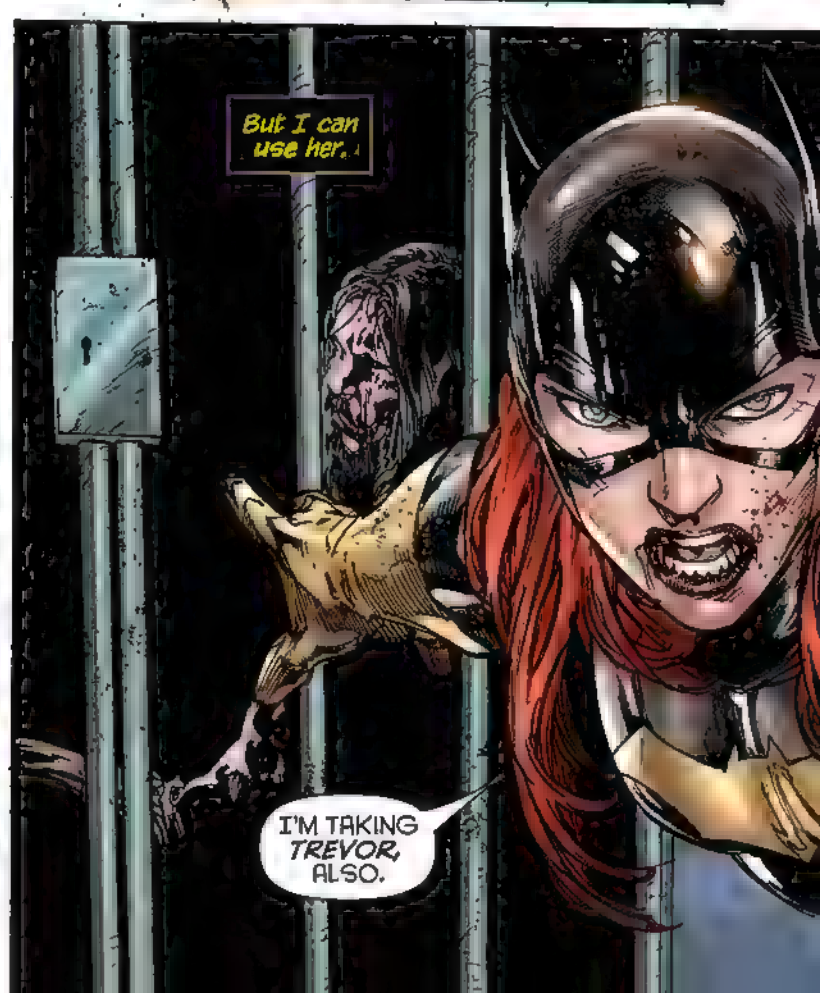
AND I'M TAKING RICKY, THE KID YOU MUTILATED FOR STEALING CARS.



She wants to cause pain so bad she isn't thinking anymore.

AND ONE OTHER THING, JUST SO WE'RE CLEAR.

I can't save her.



But I can use her.

I'M TAKING TREVOR, ALSO.



Nooooo!

HE HASN'T PAID.

HE HASN'T NEARLY PAID.

I'm not gonna make it.

Rainbows again.

But the colors are dark this time.

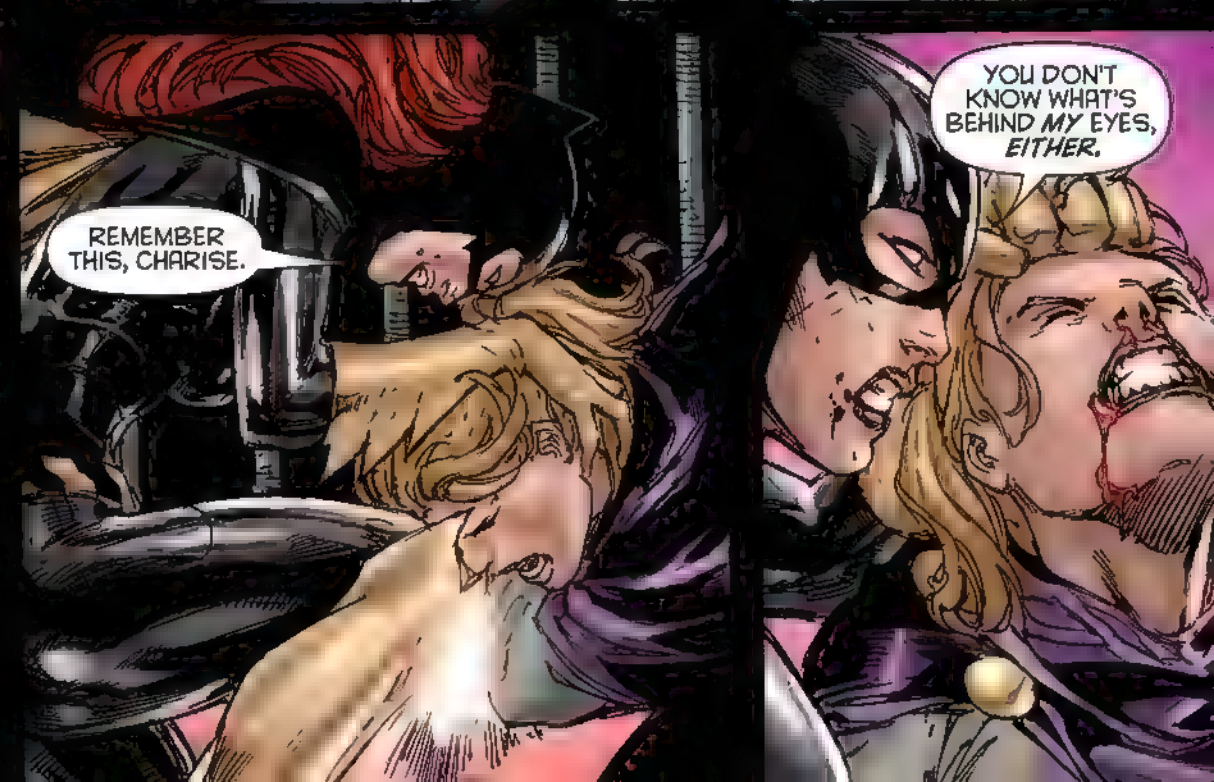
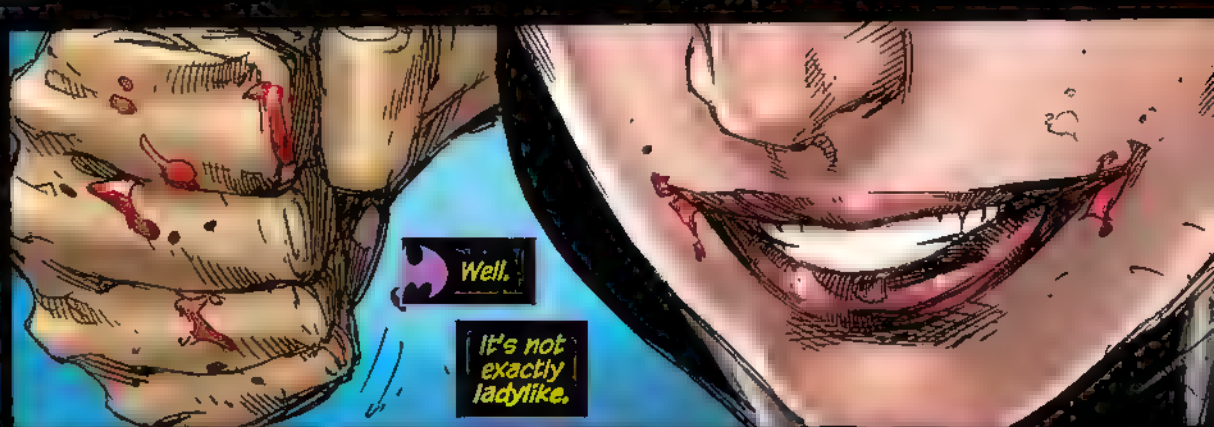
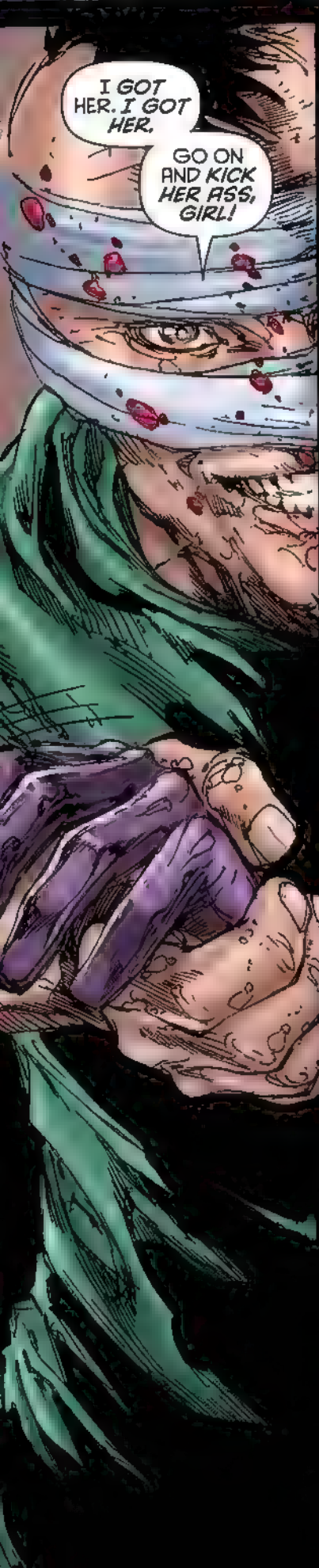
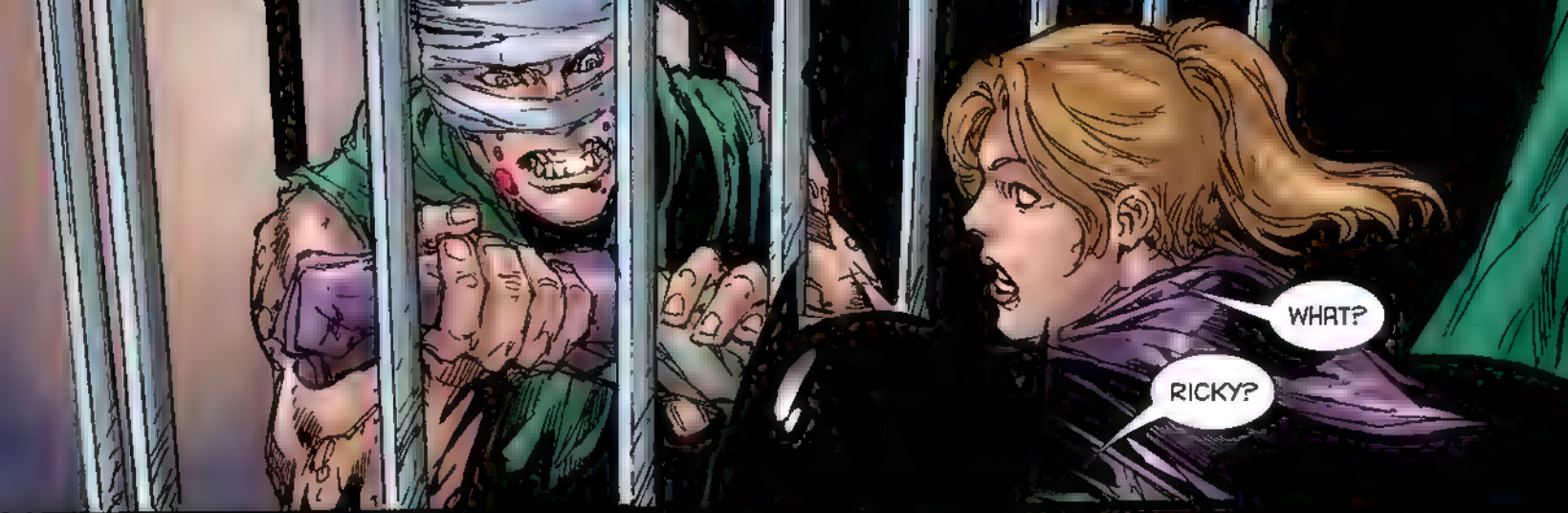
I can't...

Can't let her do that again.

I'm not...

URK

Oh





GLCK!

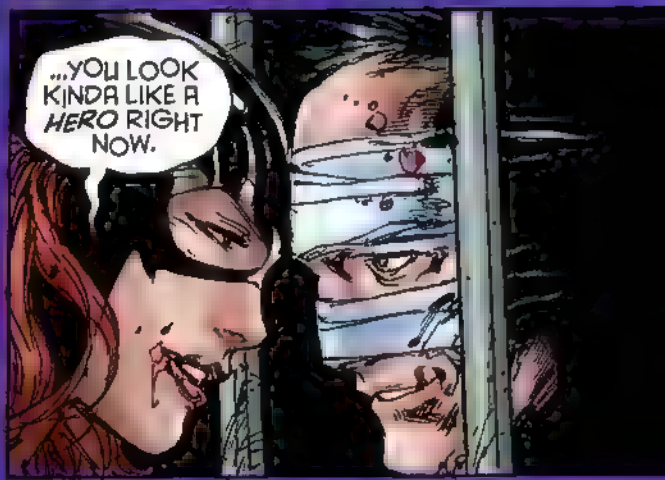


YOU WON.
YOU BEAT
HER.

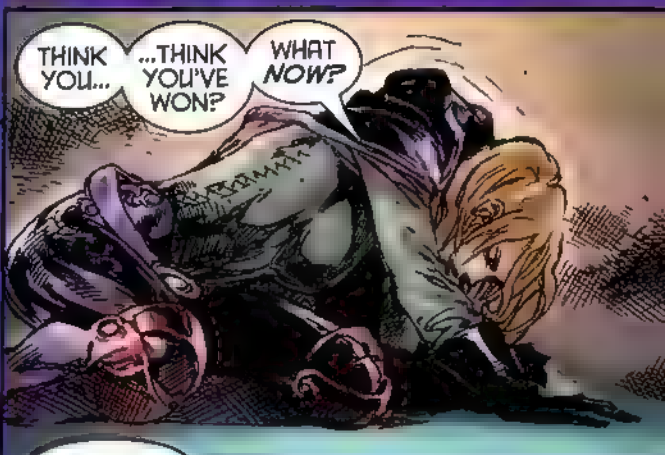
YOU
DON'T LOOK
SO GOOD.

REALLY?

I WAS JUST
ABOUT TO
SAY...



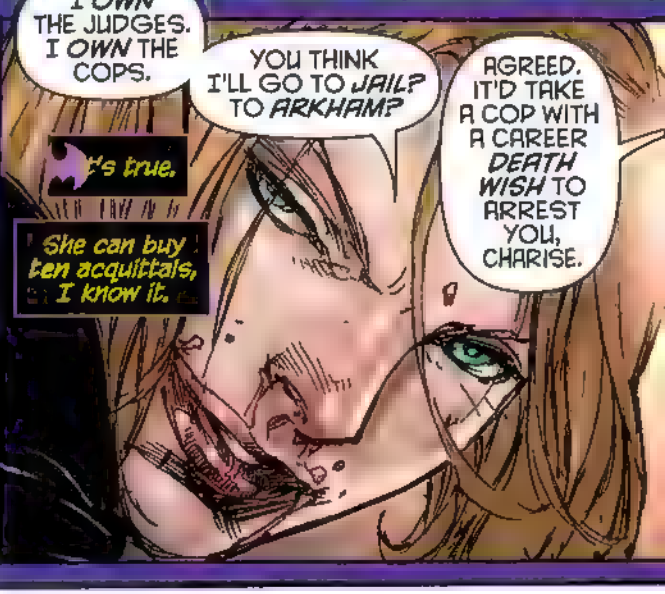
...YOU LOOK
KINDA LIKE A
HERO RIGHT
NOW.



THINK
YOU...

...THINK
YOU'VE
WON?

WHAT
NOW?



I OWN
THE JUDGES.
I OWN THE
COPS.

YOU THINK
I'LL GO TO JAIL?
TO ARKHAM?

AGREED.
IT'D TAKE
A COP WITH
A CAREER
DEATH
WISH TO
ARREST
YOU,
CHARISE.

It's true.

She can buy
ten acquittals,
I know it.



HOW FORTUNATE THAT WE ACTUALLY HAVE ONE OF THOSE.

Oh, fine. Now the cavalry arrives.

YOU'RE UNDER ARREST, MS. CARNES. JUST FOR THE HELL OF IT.

YOU OKAY, BATGIRL?



NEVER BETTER.

BUT A HOSPITAL MIGHT BE IN IMMEDIATE ORDER.

THIS ISN'T FINISHED. I'LL BE OUT BY MORNING.

AND YOU'LL PAY FOR THIS. I'LL BUILD AN ARMY!



GOOD. SEND THEM MY WAY, CHERISE.

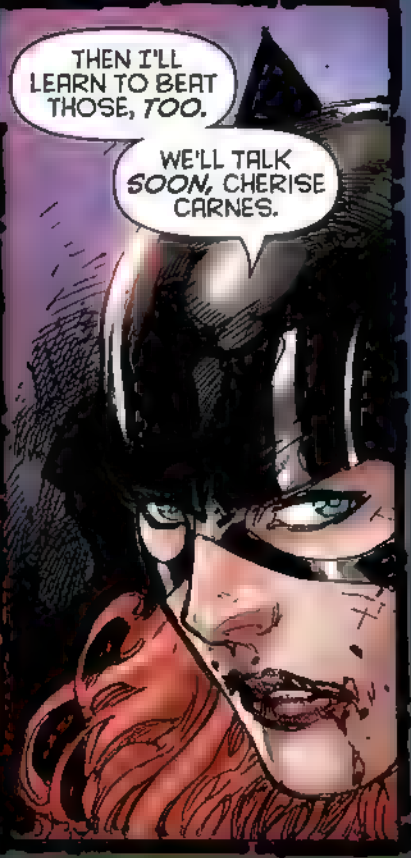
YOU DON'T KNOW. YOU DON'T KNOW WHAT I HAVE.

I HAVE SECURITY CAMERAS EVERYWHERE.



I OWN THE SERVERS AND THE DATABASES.

I WILL TEAR GOTHAM APART.



THEN I'LL LEARN TO BEAT THOSE, TOO.

WE'LL TALK SOON, CHERISE CARNES.

FOUR HOURS LATER...

Exhausted.
Never been
so tired.

Fortunately,
Detective
McKenna
"knew a guy."

The stitches
weren't pretty,
but the news
wasn't too bad...
liver laceration,
grade three
hepatic incision.
It'll clot
itself out.

LET ME GUESS,
ANOTHER DOOR-
KNOB, RIGHT?

SOMETHING
LIKE THAT.

I HOPE YOU
KNOW WHAT
YOU'RE DOING,
GORDON.

MEET OUR
NEW BOYKITTY
ROOMIE, ALASKA.
NOT ALLERGIC,
I HOPE?

OH, MAN. HE'S
GORGEOUS...

He is.

Almost makes me
forget that Knightfall
is still out there.

I can't let Gotham
become Knightfall's
lynching tree. I won't.

So it's war. So
be it, Charise.

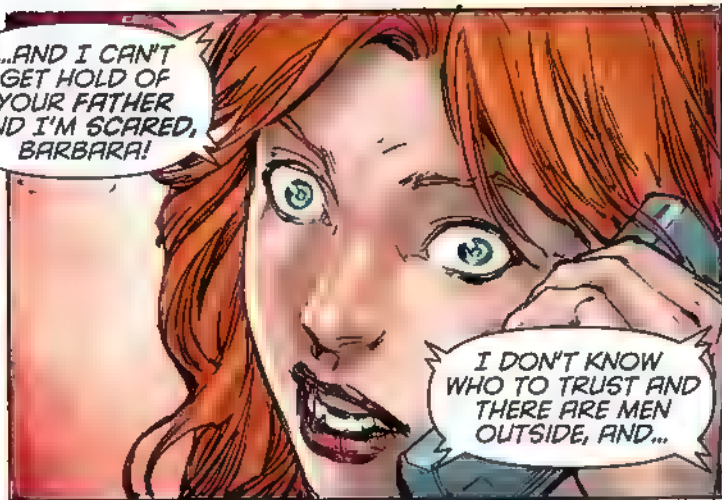
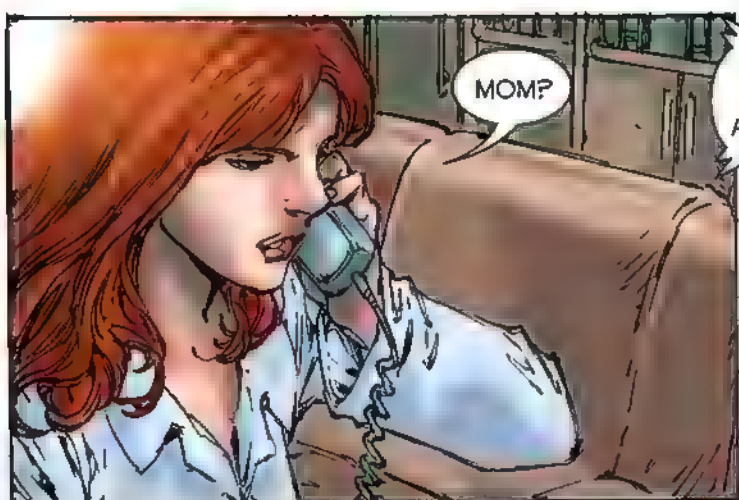
OH, AND
YOUR MOM'S
ON YOUR PHONE,
GORDON.

I'll take
you down.

GOT IT,
THANKS,
ALYSIA.

Alaska.
Weird.

We had a
Siamese named
Alaska when I
was just a kid.



FORTY-EIGHT HOURS AND A PHALANX OF LAWYERS LATER...

BLACKGATE PRISON.



AH.
JONATHAN MILLS,
ALSO KNOWN AS
MIRROR.

THANK YOU
FOR MEETING
ME, SIR.

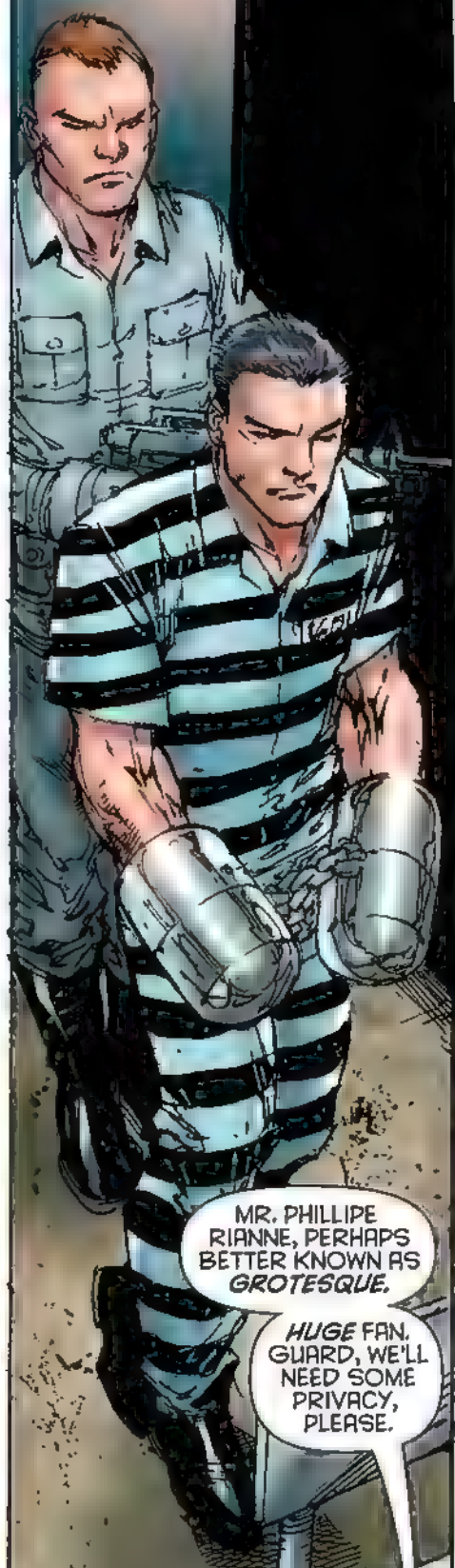
ARKHAM ASYLUM.



LISLY BONNER,
FORMERLY WORKING
UNDER THE
NOM DE GUERRE
OF *GRETEL*.

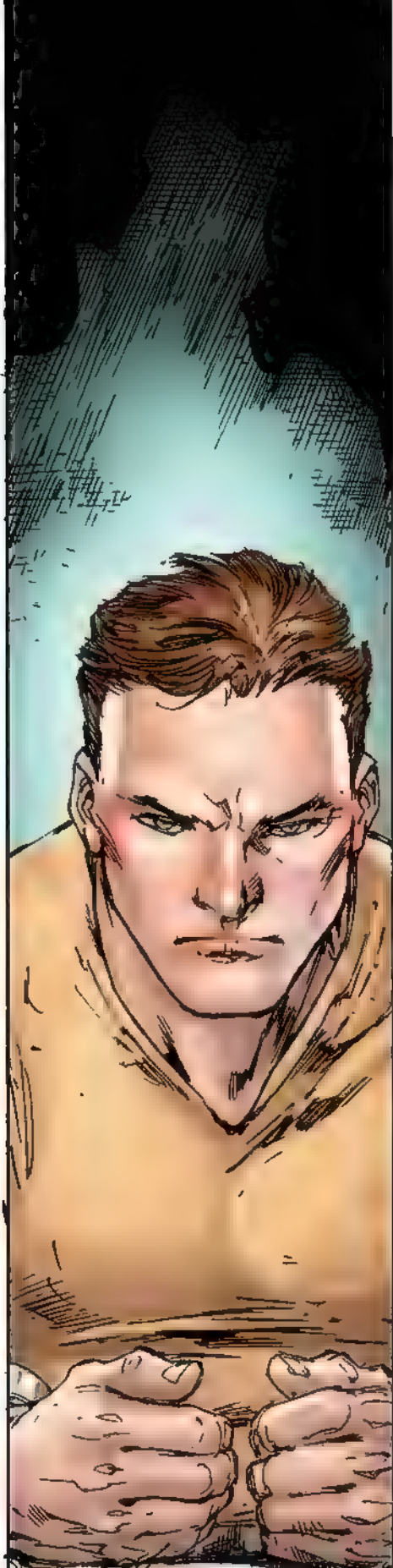
A PLEASURE
TO MEET YOU.
HAVE A SEAT,
WON'T YOU?

BELLE REVE PRISON, LOUISIANA.

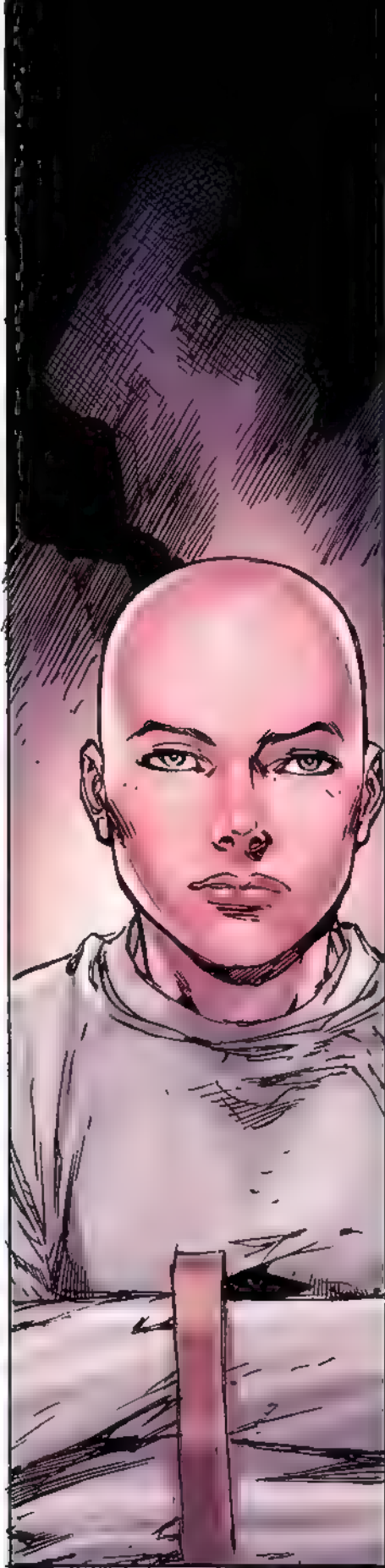


MR. PHILLIPE
RIANNE, PERHAPS
BETTER KNOWN AS
GROTESQUE.

HUGE FAN.
GUARD, WE'LL
NEED SOME
PRIVACY,
PLEASE.



WE'VE SPENT
QUITE A LOT OF MONEY
TO MAKE THIS MEETING
HAPPEN, MR. MILLS, SO
I'LL SKIP FURTHER
PLEASANTRIES, IF YOU
DON'T MIND.



QUITE SIMPLY,
WE BELIEVE YOU
HAVE BEEN UNFAIRLY
VILIFIED AND
INCARCERATED.

WE'D
LIKE TO
HELP.



WE ASK ONLY
FOR ONE SMALL FAVOR,
SOMETHING I WE THINK
YOU MIGHT EVEN
ENJOY.

WE WANT
YOU TO KILL
BATGIRL
FOR US.



**NEXT ISSUE:
BATGIRL'S WORST
FEAR REALIZED...
THE RETURN OF THE
JOKER!**

BURNT OFFERINGS

A ~~DEATH~~ OF THE FAMILY

Prelude!

Writer
Ann Nocenti

Artist
Rafa Sandoval

Inker
Jordi Tarragona

I like this rotten old catwalk. Just me and the crows.

Crows spy things that sparkle and tuck them in their roosts. Natural thieves. What drives their compulsion?

I need to feather my nest with glittery things. A girl can never have enough to feel safe--

--and perfectly balanced.

SNIFF!

What's burning...?

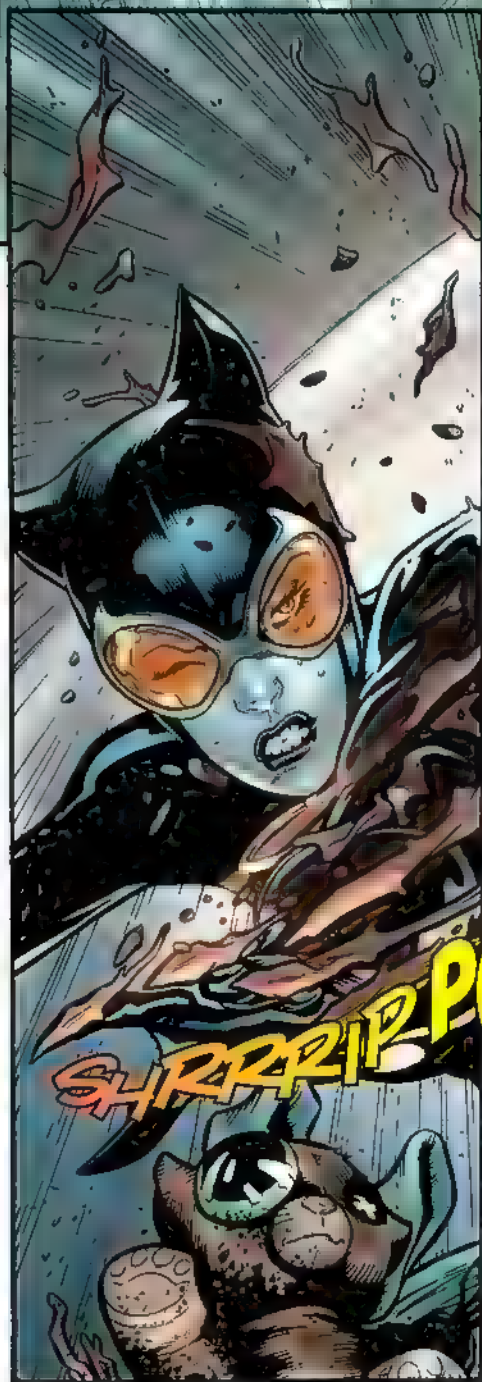
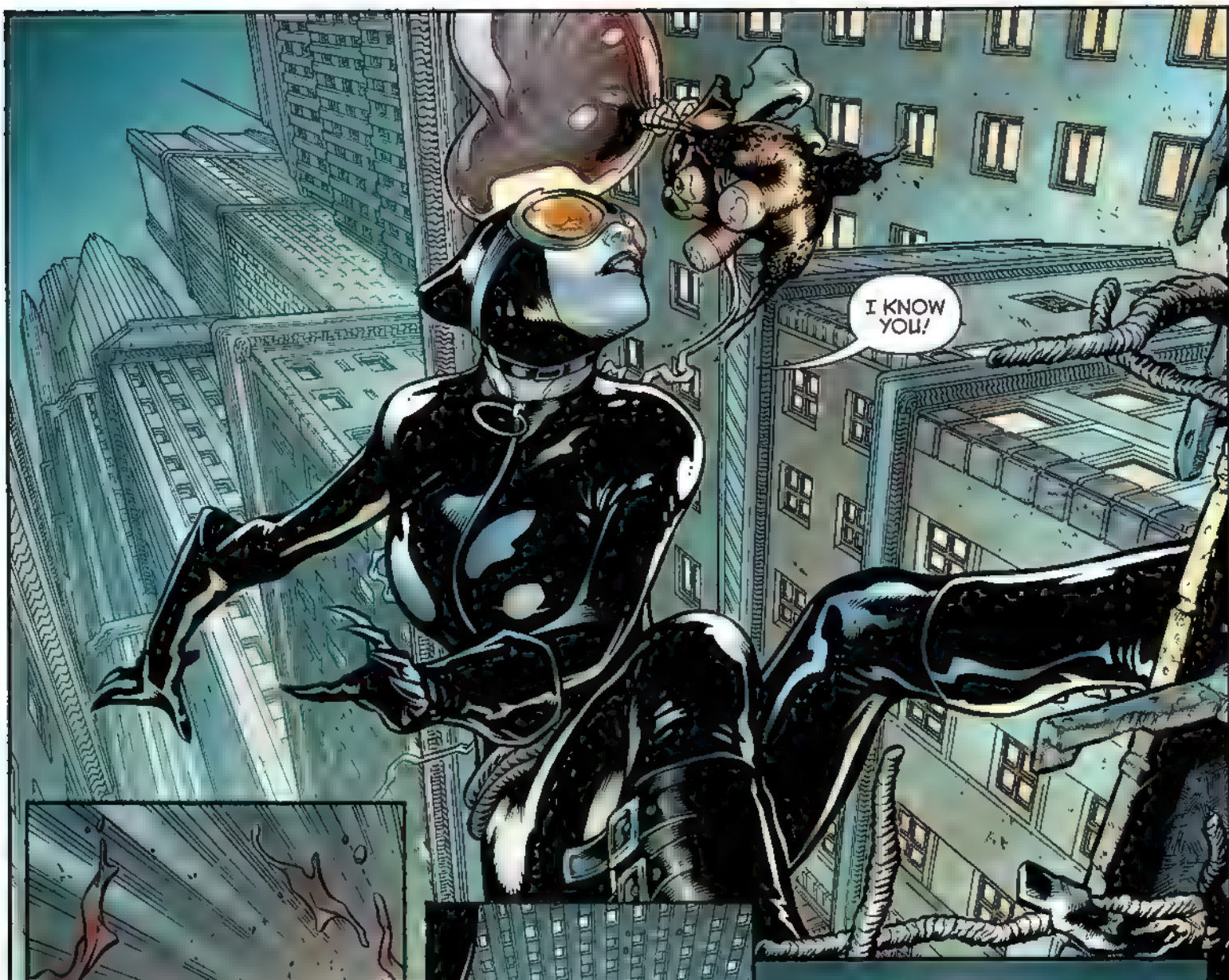
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with FCO Plascencia

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I know where I saw you.

In the hands of my best friend.

IT REMINDED ME OF YOU, SELINA, SO I BOUGHT IT.

I HATE CUTE. LOLA, YOU KNOW I HATE CUTE THINGS...

WELL THEN, BRAT, I WON'T GIVE IT TO YOU. I'LL KEEP IT FOR MYSELF.

AS YOU KNOW, I LOVE CUTE.

BUT THE WORLD IS DIVIDED BETWEEN THOSE THAT LOVE CUTE AND THOSE THAT HATE CUTE. A GULF SO WIDE, HOW DO WE CROSS IT?

OKAY, GOOFBALL, DOWN TO BUSINESS?

SHOW ME WHAT YOU GOT, SELINA. I'LL OPEN THE BOOK.

SURPRISE SURPRISE. JEWELS JEWELS JEWELS.

THE DOWAGER COUNTESS PANNED OUT, THANK YOU, OH LOVELY HEISTMASTER MINE.

I SNUCK INTO HER BOUDOIR, PHOTOGRAPHED THE LOOT, MADE FAKES, PULLED THE SWITCHEROO.

SHE WON'T NOTICE, SO SHE WON'T EVEN REPORT IT. A PERFECT SCORE, ESPECIALLY AFTER YOU POP THE CROWN JEWELS OUTTA THE CROWNS.

AND WHAT HARM IF AN OLD COUNTESS STILL BELIEVES HER DIAMOND TIARAS ARE REAL? MY FAKES LOOK BETTER.

I'M GOOD.

SO WHAT ELSE YOU GOT FOR ME, LOLA? A TASTY NEW ASSIGNMENT? A SAFE FULL OF RED RUBIES FOR ME TO--

YOU'RE GOOD.

DETAILS?

**BLOW
WIDE OPEN?**

*Memory warps things.
I see that explosion...
like a thousand smoke
flowers blooming.*

*I see faces in the flame
and smoke, the face of
every doomed kid I'd
ever bunked with.*

*It's a memory
that burns.*

*There was a kid I used
to run with, from the
orphanage. He'd say to
me, "Don't get too
comfortable."*

*I knew what he meant. Never
trust a warm bed, a happy life.
Better to tear down the house
yourself before someone
beats you to it.*

*Lead a wild, reckless
life... and get your best
damn friend killed.*

*Get all the cute things
she loved blasted to
smithereens.*

*BLOWBACK, we call
it in the biz.*

It never stops.

Who dared pull
that memory out
of me?

What sick beast was at
that explosion and stole
Lola's kitten?

SHOW
YOURSELF!

It floated down from
up there. He wants
me to chase him.

A stupid hide-and-seek
kid's game. Some
overgrown infant.

FINE! I'M
COMING TO
GET YOU!

Whose shadow is that? The silhouette is familiar.



Another cat? This one is green? Why??

Someone is mucking with my mind.

WHAT DO YOU WANT FROM ME?!



Oh God, I know you, too.

It's got to be a trap but I can't resist it...

Another toy of
Lola's!

What else did he
take and why?

SHOW
YOURSELF,
COWARD!

Lola's toy robot
projecting my shape
in the sky?

LOOK,
MOMMY. A
BIG CREEPY
CAT IN THE
SKY.

C'MON,
EARL. TSK. YOU
AND YOUR CRAZY
IMAGINATION.

IT'S
ME. I WAS
CHASING
MY OWN
SHADOW...





I GUESS I MIGHT AS WELL CONFESS, GWEN.

YOU BEING MY ONLY FRIEND AND ALL.

CUE VIOLINS?

I HATE SKIN.

REALLY? I LOVE IT. I'LL TAKE YOUR SKIN.

THOSE WERE LOLA'S THINGS. THINGS THAT BURN'T IN THE FIRE.

WHICH REMINDS ME, BETTER KEEP YOUR DISTANCE. MY FRIENDS TEND TO END UP DEAD.

BLAH, BLAH, HEARD IT BEFORE.

HOW'D YOU GET THESE TOYS?

THEY DROPPED IN MY LAP. SOMEBODY WANTS TO TORTURE CATWOMAN.

I IMAGINE THAT LIST IS LONG.

I HATE SKIN.

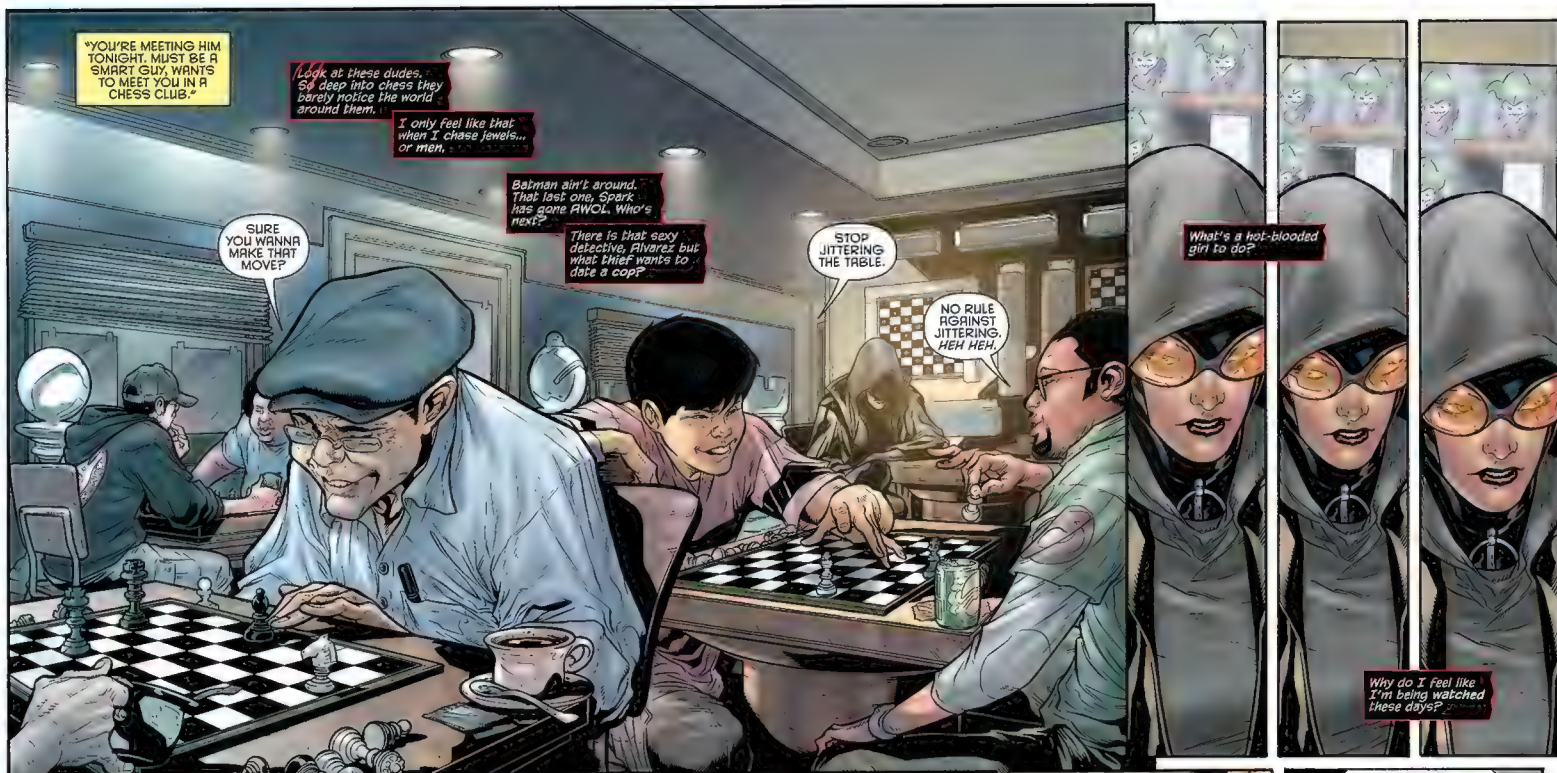
YOU SAID THAT.

I'VE GOT A NEW CONNECTION. HE'S GOT A VERY LUCRATIVE HEIST FOR YOU.

GOTTA PAY THE RENT ON MY NEW SHACK. LET'S SEE WHAT YOU GOT--

HE'S HOT.

DON'T GO THERE. JUST DON'T.



"YOU'RE MEETING HIM TONIGHT. MUST BE A SMART GUY, WANTS TO MEET YOU IN A CHESS CLUB."

Look at these dudes. So deep into chess they barely notice the world around them.

I only feel like that when I chase jewels... or men.

Batman ain't around. That last one, Spark has gone AWOL. Who's next?

There is that sexy detective, Alvarez but what thief wants to date a copp

SURE YOU WANNA MAKE THAT MOVE?

STOP JITTERING THE TABLE.

NO RULE AGAINST JITTERING. HEH HEH.

What's a hot-blooded girl to do?

Why do I feel like I'm being watched these days?



Well, hello. What have we here...



CATWOMAN, I PRESUME? I'M TRIP WINTER.

STUDY THIS MAP OF GOTHAM.



YOU ARE TO STEAL THE BLACK QUEEN FROM HERE AND MOVE IT SO THAT IT KILLS THE WHITE QUEEN. A PAWN WILL BE SACRIFICED.



SORRY, BUDDY. I DON'T DO HITS.

NO WORRIES. WE'RE TALKING CHESS, NOT PEOPLE.



MY CLIENT WANTS THE OUTCOME OF A GAME ALTERED. MAKE BLACK'S MOVE FOR HIM, BUT NOT THE MOVE HE WANTED TO MAKE.

HENCE THE THEFT.

CORRECT.

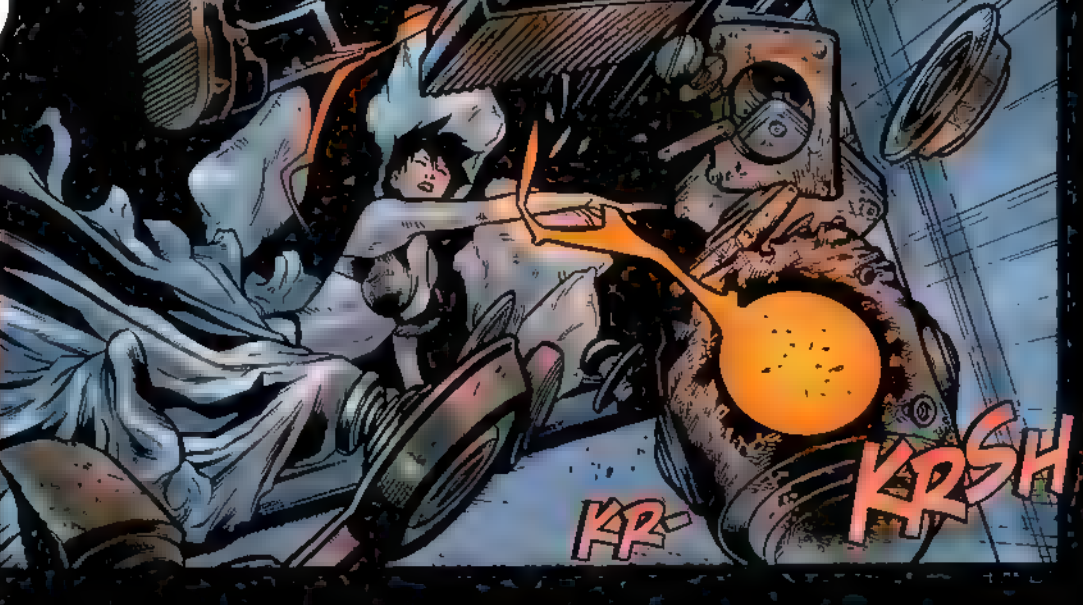
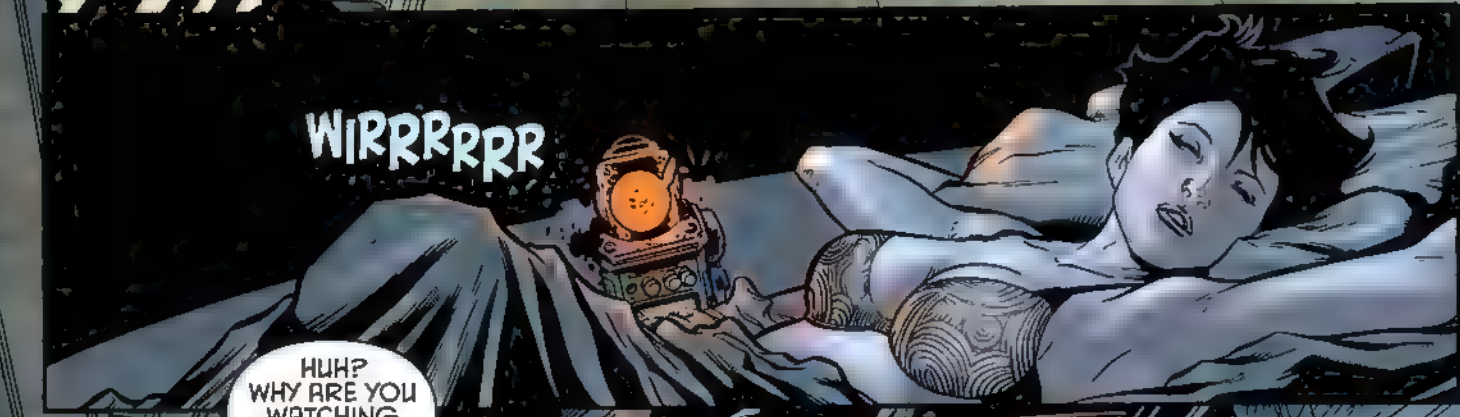
"THE GAME IS BEING
PLAYED WITH GIANT
CHESS PIECES PLACED
ALL OVER GOTHAM.

"THEY ARE IN THE *ENDGAME*,
AND THEREFORE GUARDING
THE LAST PIECES, ESPECIALLY
THEIR QUEENS.

"QUEENS, AS YOU
MAY KNOW, ARE
COVETED, PRECIOUS,
GAME-CHANGERS.

"GET A GOOD NIGHT'S
REST; YOU MAKE YOUR
MOVE *TOMORROW*."

NIGHT



MORNING

Already scoped out the White Queen.

She's in an outdoor courtyard a block away.

If I can get the Black Queen tied up and moving, control the trajectory, and swing with it, I can drop it on the White Queen.

I hope.

Now, which of these civilian bystanders are for real, and which are undercover?

Guy eating pizza. What's a poor dweeb like him doing in a rich man's apartment? Suspicious.

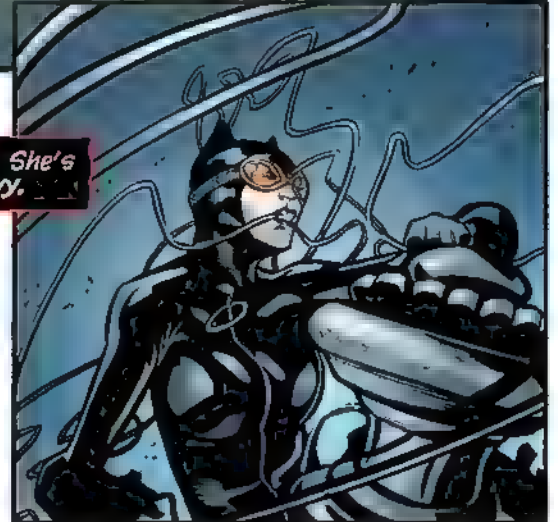
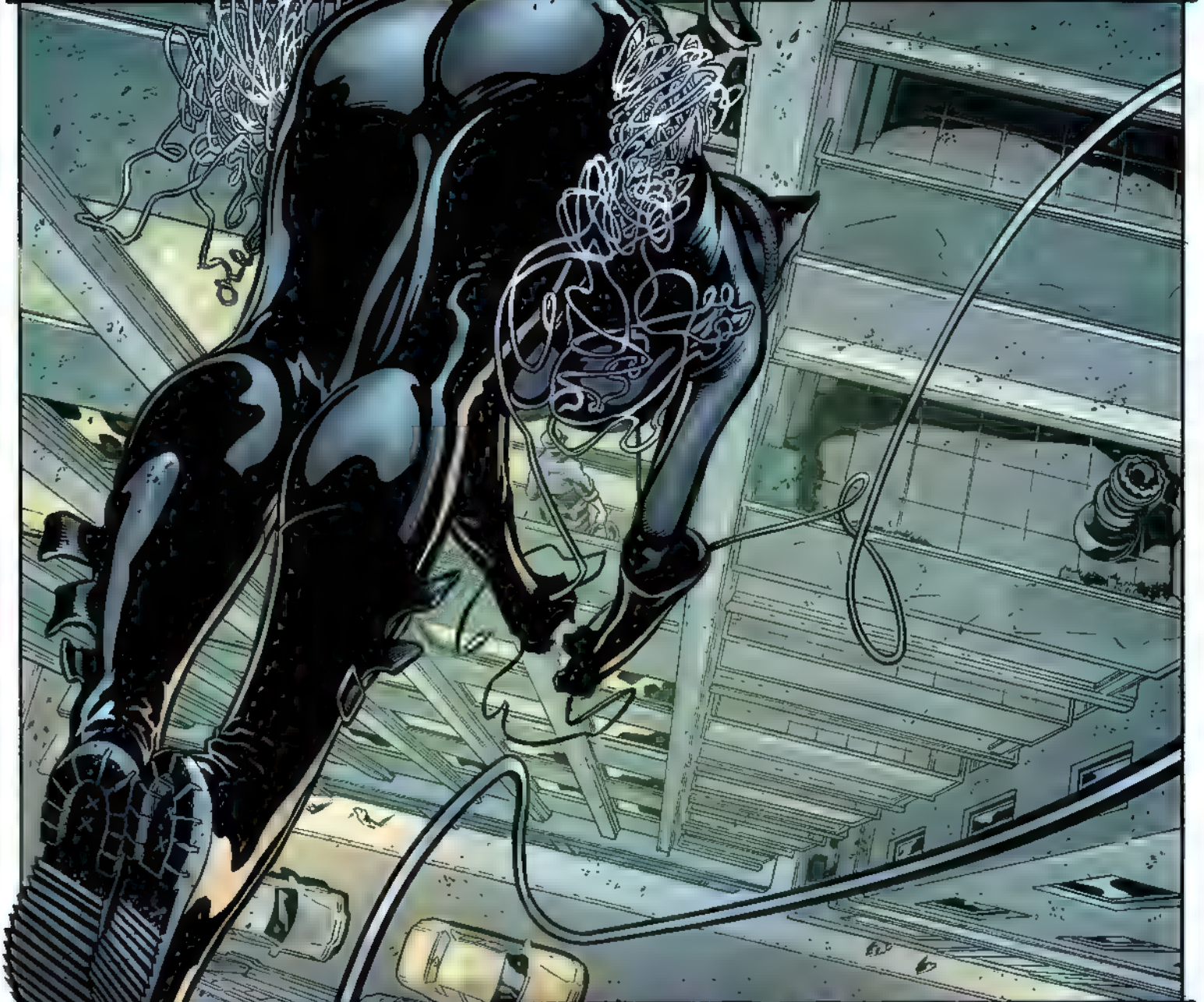
Window washer is lousy at his job. Not competent with the rigging. Suspicious.

One short guard and a big lug. The lug will be my ballast.

Couple fighting. Look at their kooky laundry. Must be into cosplay or endless Halloween or something. Harmless.



Guards just got a food delivery. Window washer in perfect position. Conditions ideal!



Ugh. She's heavy.



*They can't hear a thing
over all that chewing
and yakking.*

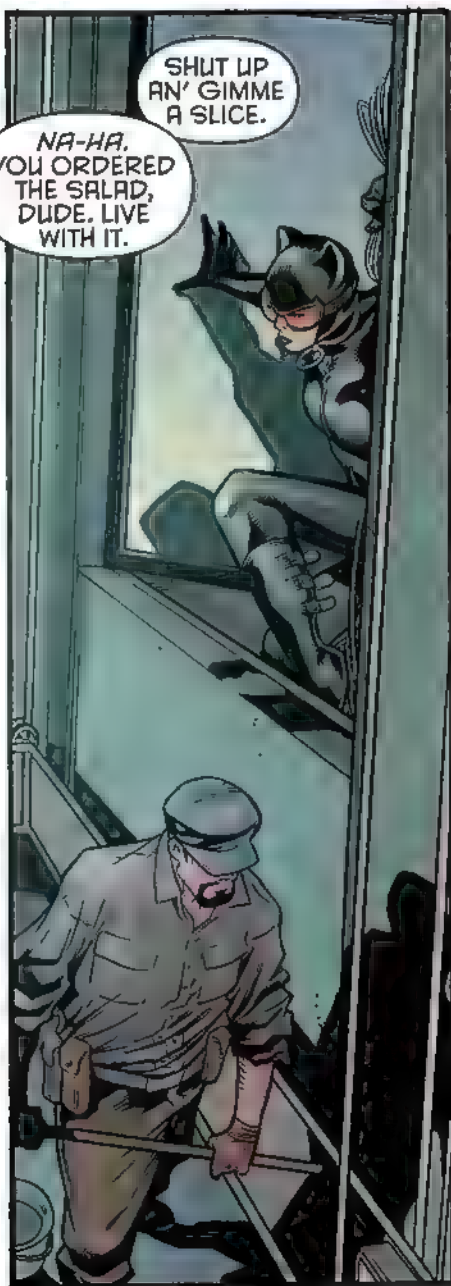
IT'S ALWAYS
LIKE, YOUR
CHOLESTEROL, YOUR
ARTERIES, YOUR
BLOOD PRESSURE,
BLAH BLAH NAG
NAG.

DUDE,
SHE DON'T
WANT YOU
TO DIE.



IF SHE
COULD SEE ME
NOW, EATING THIS
GREASY SAUSAGE
AN' EGG SANDWICH,
PIZZA ON THE
SIDE...

--I MEAN,
WHAT'S THE POINT
OF LIVING AN EXTRA
TEN YEARS IF YOU
HAVE TO LIVE THEM
WITHOUT THE
COMPANIONSHIP
OF SAUSAGE?



SHUT UP
AN' GIMME
A SLICE.

NA-HA.
YOU ORDERED
THE SALAD,
DUDE. LIVE
WITH IT.

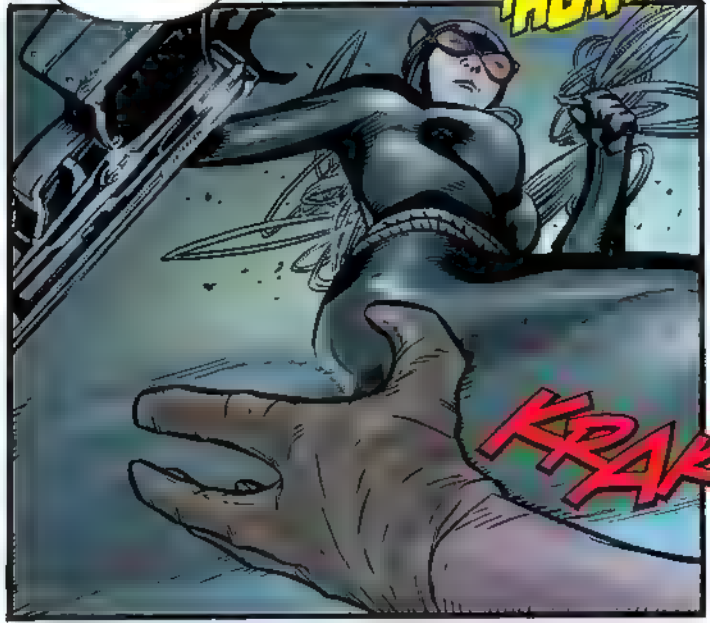


YOU HEAR
SOMETHIN'?

YEAH, A
THUNK.

UH-OH.
WHERE'S
THAT STUPID
THING WE'RE
GUARDING?

THUNK



KRAK



HEY,
BIG GUY,
EVER BEEN
A BALLAST
BEFORE?

ALL THAT
SAUSAGE AND
PIZZA YOU BEEN
EATIN' MAKES YOU
THE RIGHT WEIGHT
FOR IT.

KRAK

KRAK



DON'T
WORRY,
YOU'LL
LIVE.

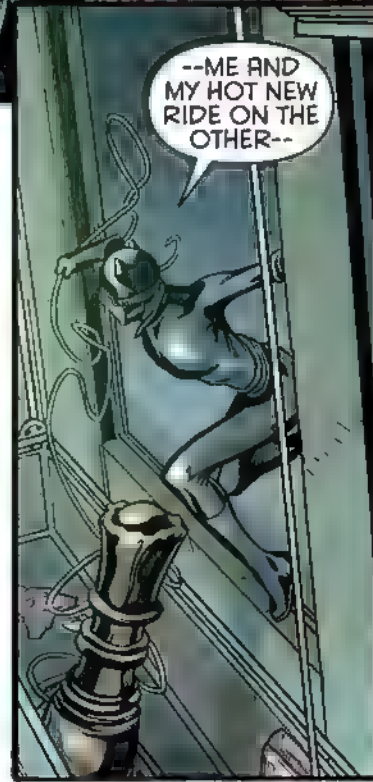


KR

KRSH



THE
SAUSAGE
LUG ON ONE
END--



--ME AND
MY HOT NEW
RIDE ON THE
OTHER--

I kinda want to yell something stupid like--

YEEHA!

Snag the next ledge...

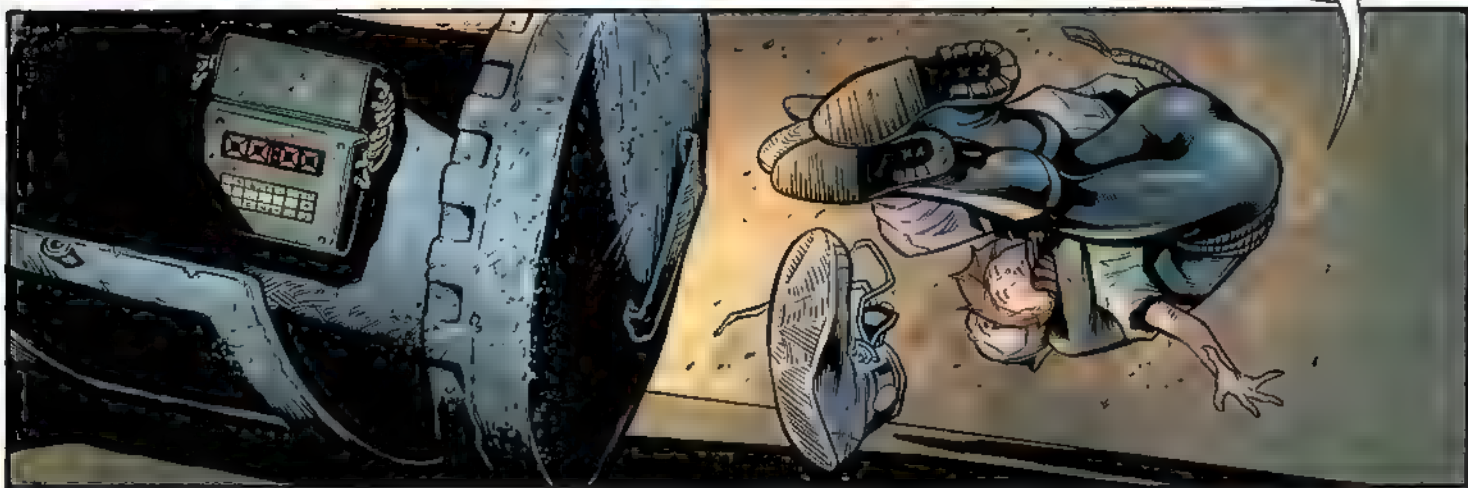
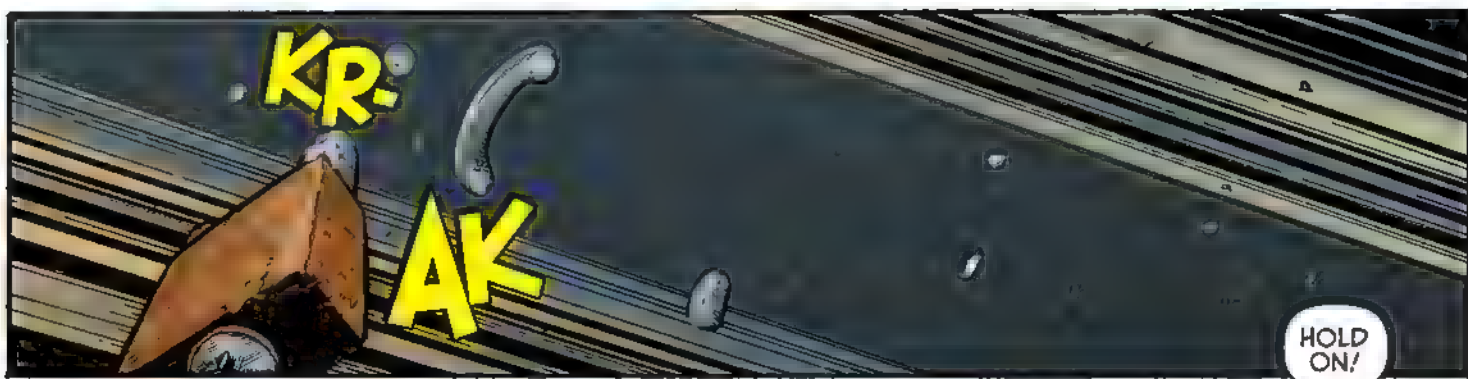
...use his weight for the swing...

...cut my ballast loose before he's street pizza... time this perfectly...

...Black to White Queen... Ka-boom!

OMIGOD! I DIDN'T KNOW YOU WERE IN THERE--SO SORRY! LET'S GET YOU OUT--

NO! GET AWAY! IT'S A TRAP! DON'T LET ME OUT! THE PAWN! THE PAWN WILL BE SACRIFICED!





OKAY?

OKAY.

SHE'S
BURNING...

STOP
LOOKING.

A comic book panel depicting Catwoman and a young woman in a state of panic. Catwoman, wearing her signature black and white suit and goggles, is shown from the chest up, looking back over her shoulder with a worried expression. She has her arms around the young woman, who has short brown hair and a distressed look. They are in a dark, crumbling environment with jagged, broken stone walls and debris everywhere. A speech bubble from Catwoman reads "NOW WHAT...?". In the bottom right corner, there is a red, stylized text overlay that says "Next Issue: to Skin a Cat".

NOW WHAT...?

Next Issue:
to Skin
a Cat

DC COMICS presents BATMAN in
DEATH OF THE FAMILY

FUNNY BONES

WHERE
IS JOKER,
HARLEY?!
HARLEY!



SCOTT SNYDER writer

HE'S
GONE, BATS.
GONE...

MAYBE,
THOUGH...MAYBE
YOU'LL BE THE NEXT
ONE. LIKE I ALWAYS
THOUGHT YOU WOULD.
MAYBE YOU'LL COME BACK
LIKE HE USED TO BE,
BACK THEN...

GREG CAPULLO penciller



...BEAUTIFUL.

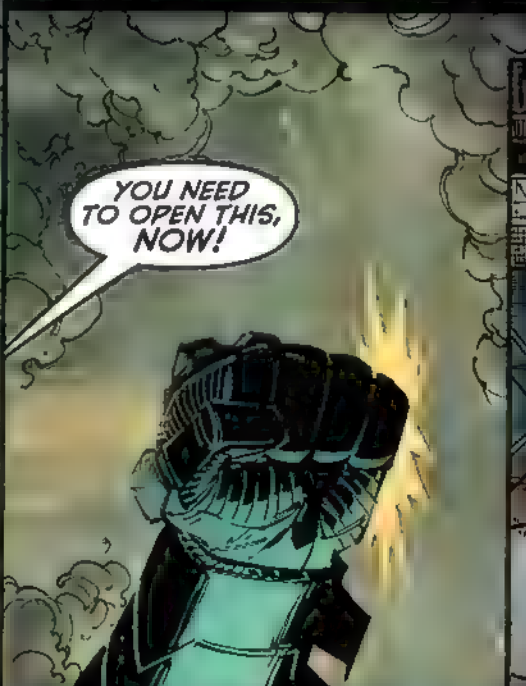
JONATHAN GLAPION inker

HARLEY!
THERE'S NO
TIME!

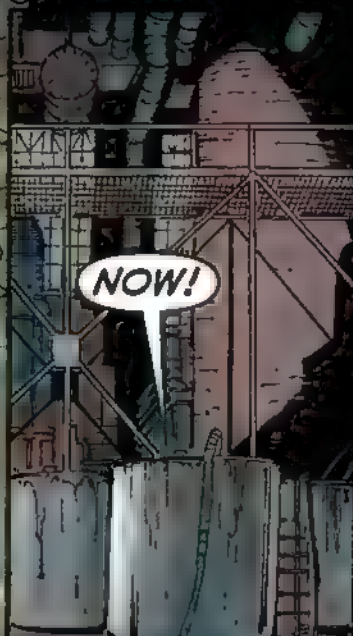


FEO PLASCENCIA colorist

YOU NEED
TO OPEN THIS,
NOW!



NOW!



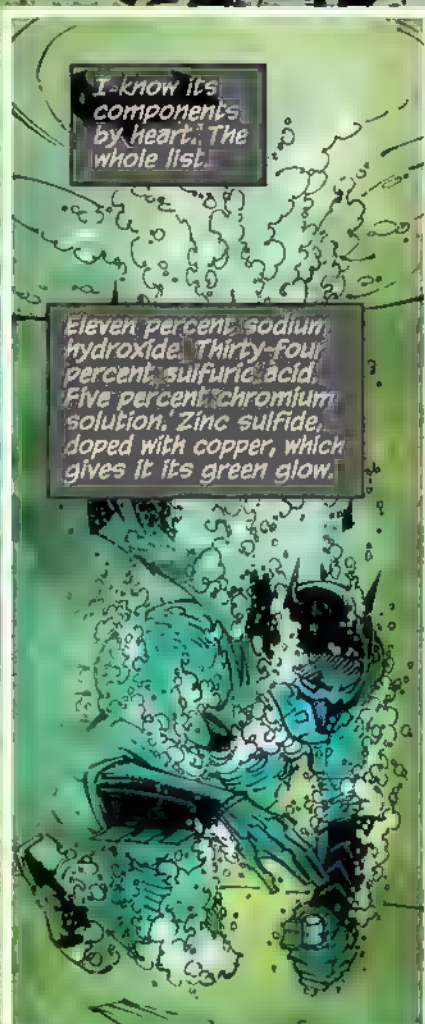
RICHARD STARKINGS and COMICRAFT'S JIMMY BETANCOURT lettering



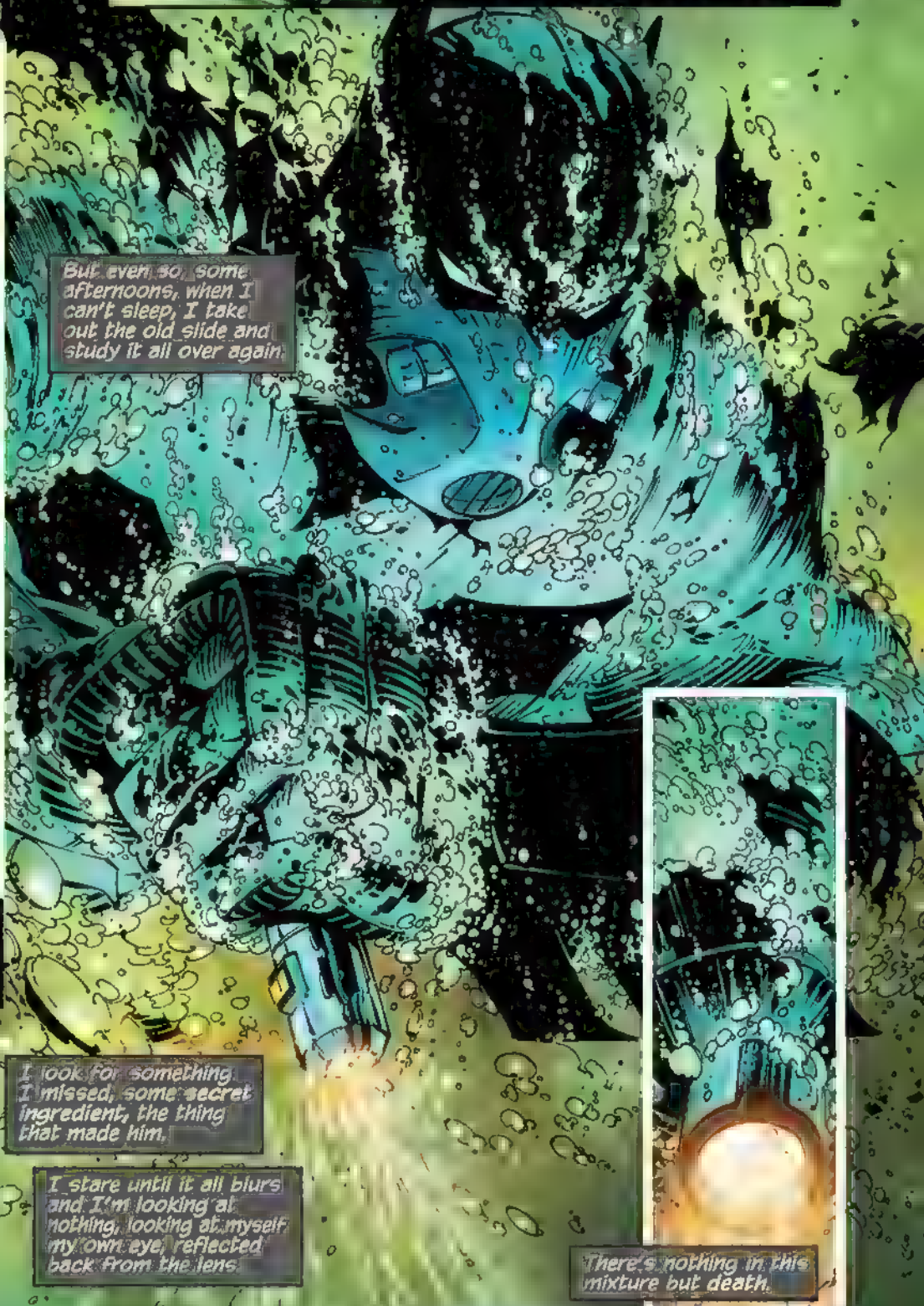
CAPULLO & PLASCENCIA cover



TREVOR MCCARTHY variant cover



KATIE KUBERT asst. editor
MIKE MARTS editor



BATMAN created by BOB KANE

Something no
one should be
able to survive.

CLANG

UNH!

SCAN FOR HEAT
SIGNATURE.

SCAN IMPOSSIBLE.
DAMAGE ASSESSMENT...
IRREPARABLE.

IRREPARABLE.

IRREPARABLE.



ALLIES, BE ON HIGHEST ALERT.
JOKER MAY BE TARGETING
YOU INDIVIDUALLY. REPEAT:
BE ON HIGHEST ALERT.

ALFRED,
THERE WAS
NOTHING ON
HARLEY AT THE
PLANT...



...BUT I
SENT YOU IMAGES
OF THE TIRE TREADS
OUTSIDE. MAYBE
THEY--



ALFRED?





ALFRED?



ALFRED,
ARE YOU
THERE?

CREAK



ALFRED?



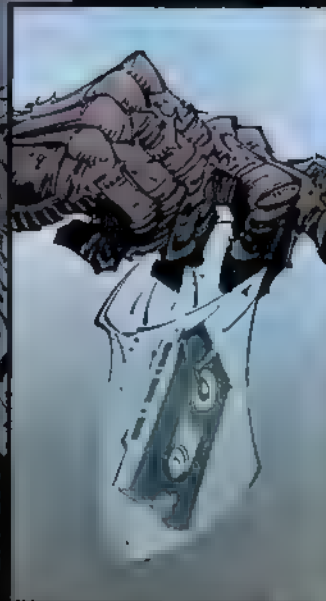
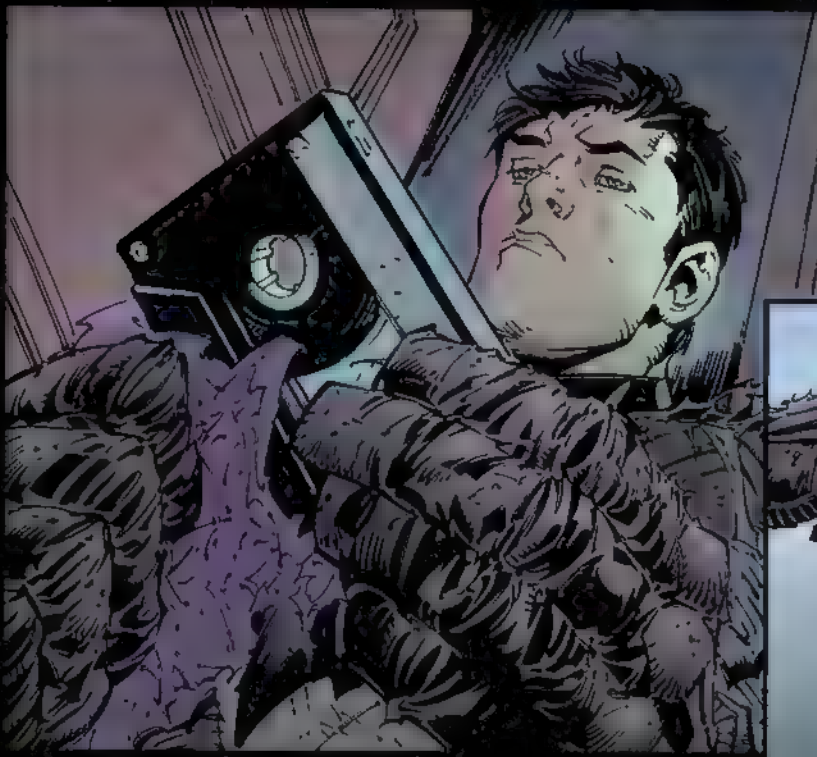
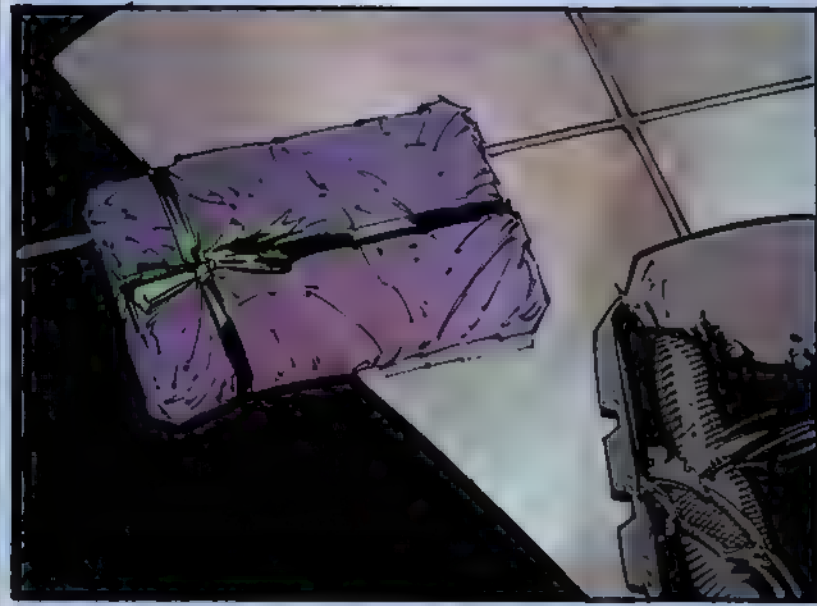
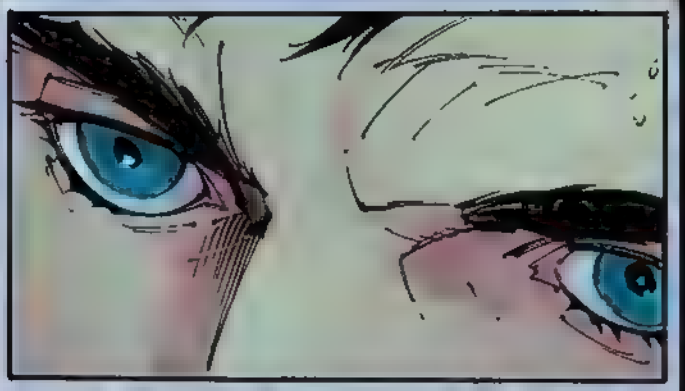
CREAK

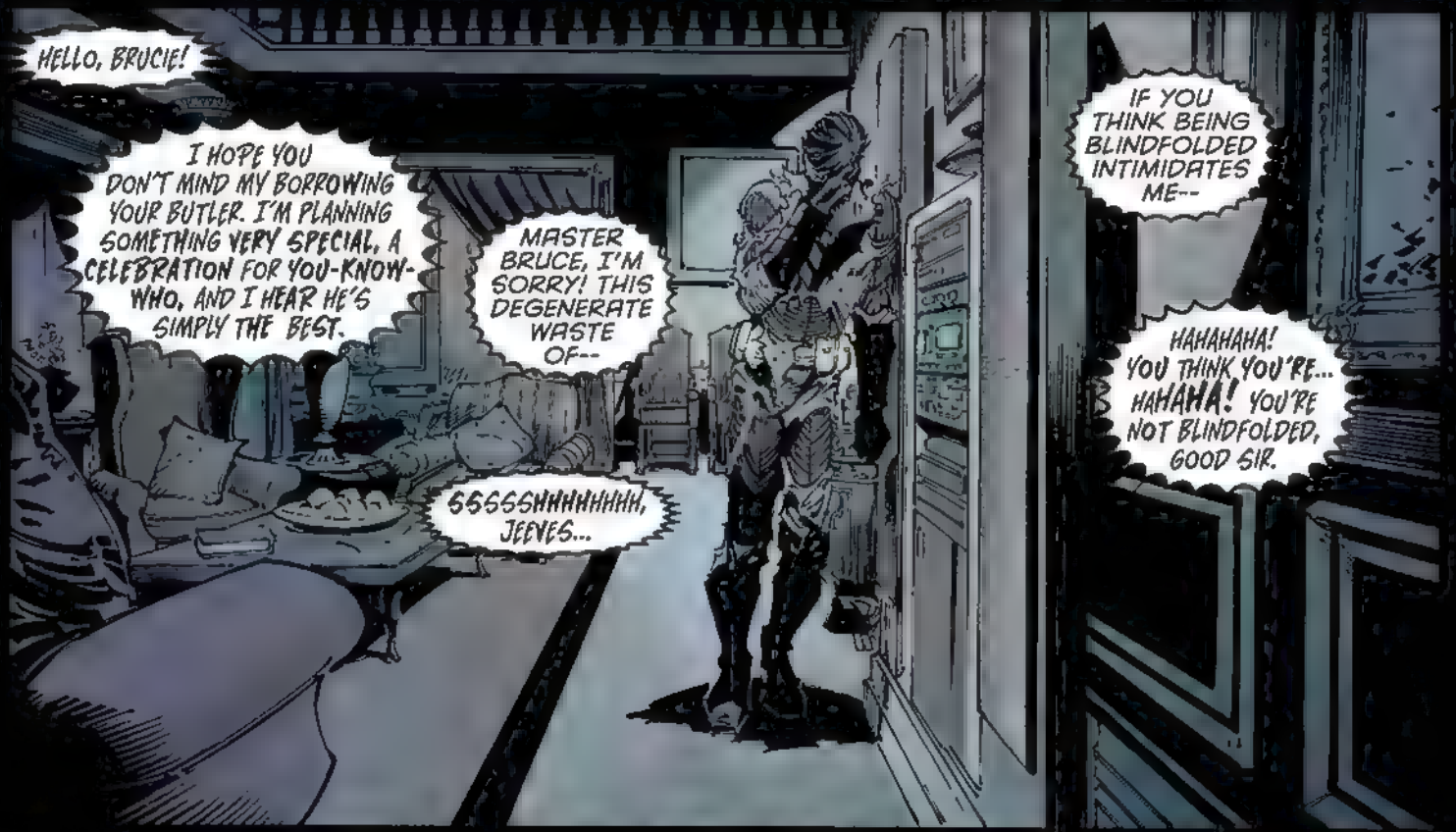


CREAK



NO...





HELLO, BRUCIE!

I HOPE YOU
DON'T MIND MY BORROWING
YOUR BUTLER. I'M PLANNING
SOMETHING VERY SPECIAL. A
CELEBRATION FOR YOU-KNOW-
WHO, AND I HEAR HE'S
SIMPLY THE BEST.

MASTER
BRUCE, I'M
SORRY! THIS
DEGENERATE
WASTE
OF--

SSSSSHHHHHHHH,
JEEVES...

IF YOU
THINK BEING
BLINDFOLDED
INTIMIDATES
ME--

HAHAHAHA!
YOU THINK YOU'RE...
HAHAHA! YOU'RE
NOT BLINDFOLDED,
GOOD SIR.



BUT...

I
BURNED YOUR
EYES WITH WITH
AMMONIA.

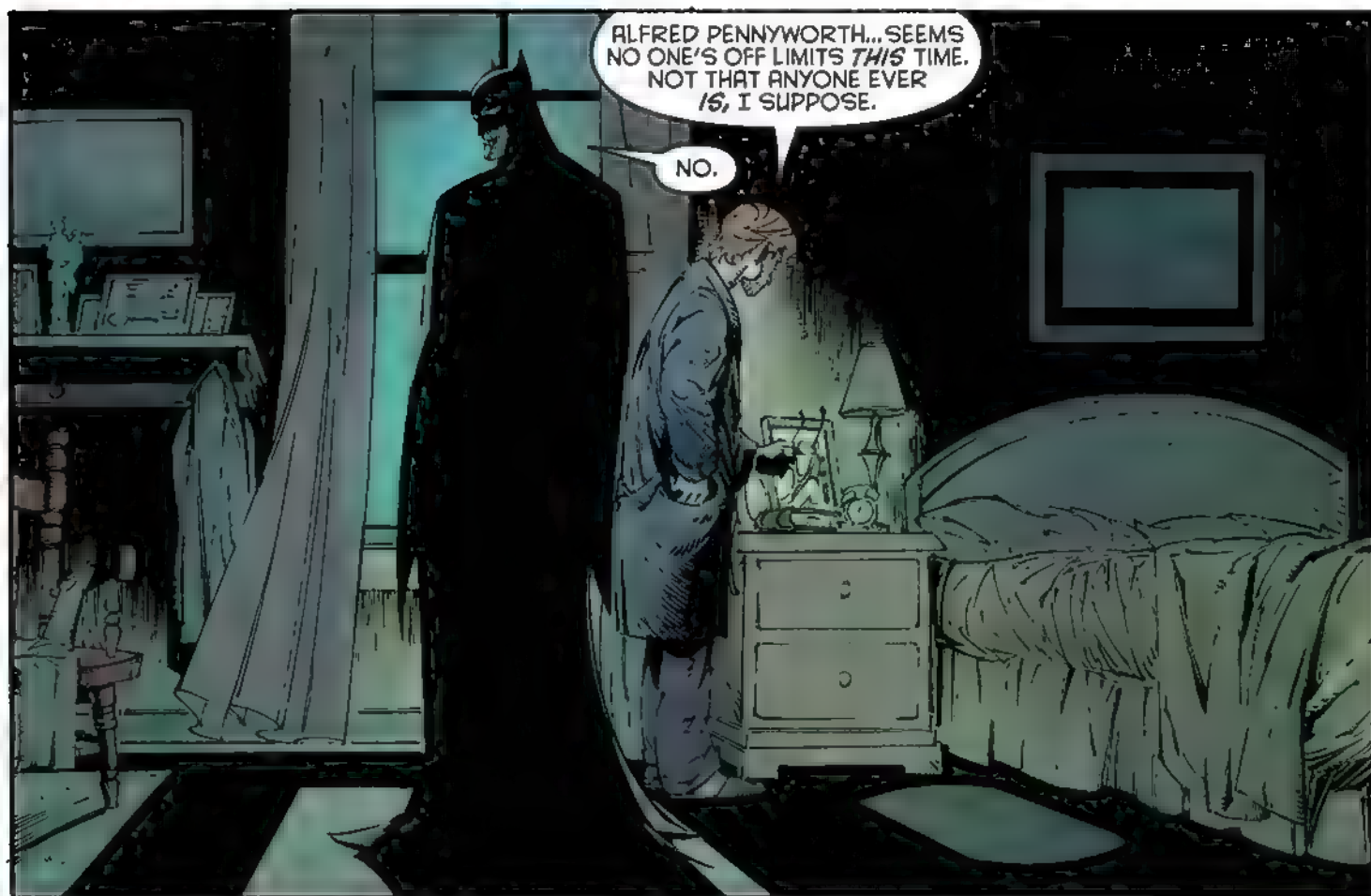
HERE,
I'LL DO IT
AGAIN FOR
FUNNNN!

PIEIEEEEEEE!

HAHAHA!







ALFRED PENNYWORTH... SEEMS NO ONE'S OFF LIMITS *THIS* TIME. NOT THAT ANYONE EVER *IS*, I SUPPOSE.

NO.



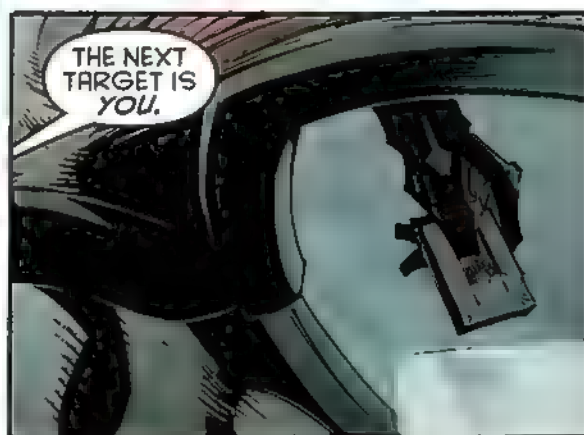
IT'S WHAT I HATE THE MOST ABOUT THAT LUNATIC. WITH EVERYONE ELSE, THERE'S SOME SENSE OF LOGIC, SOME *MOTIVE* THAT MAKES SENSE.

EVEN THE DEEP ARKHAM CREW, RIDDLER, FREEZE...

...IF YOU'RE A GOOD ENOUGH DETECTIVE, YOU CAN GET SOME INKLING OF WHAT THEIR NEXT MOVE MIGHT BE. BUT WITH *HIM* ALL YOU CAN DO IS *REACT*... SEE WHO HIS NEXT *TARGET* IS.

GOD HELP THE MAN WHO CAN THINK LIKE HIM.

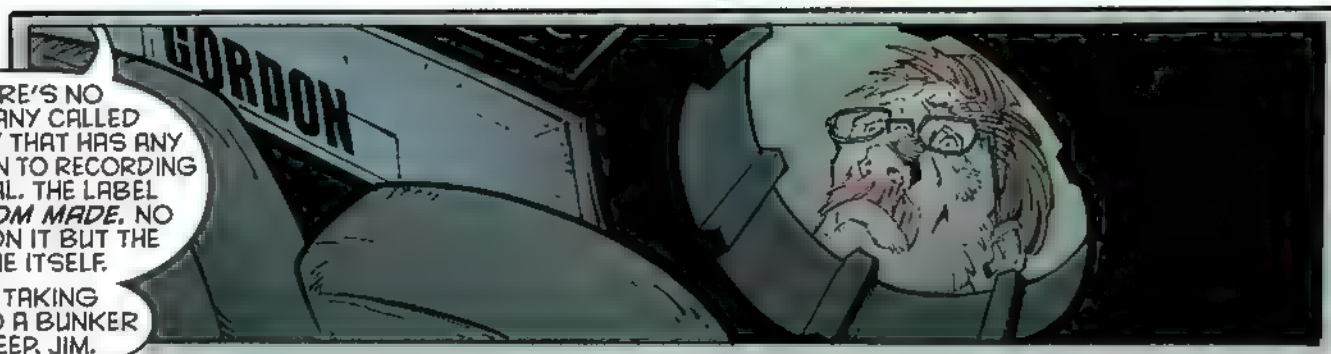
JIM... THAT'S WHY I'M HERE.

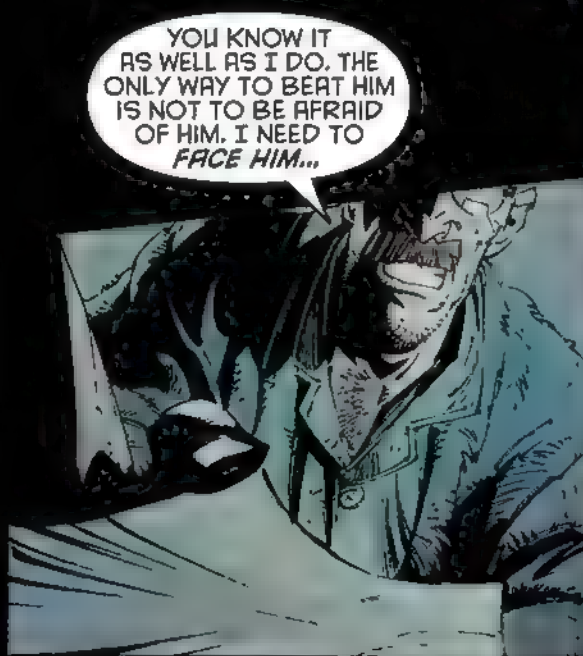
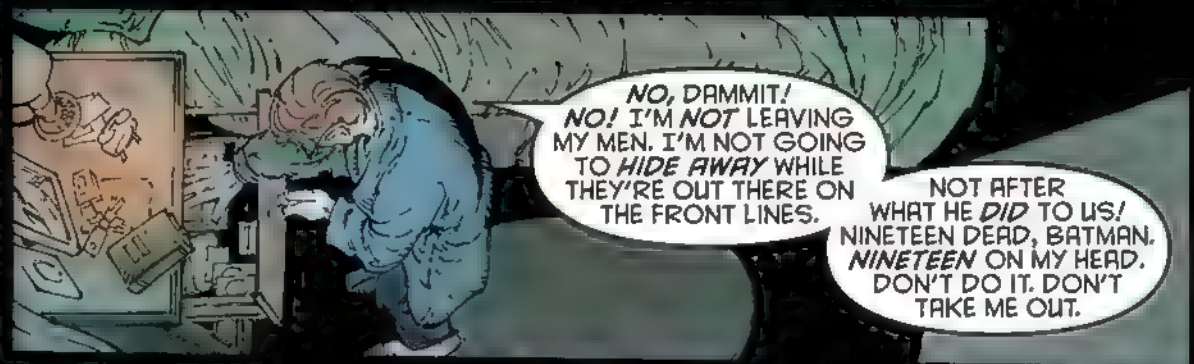


THE NEXT TARGET IS *YOU*.

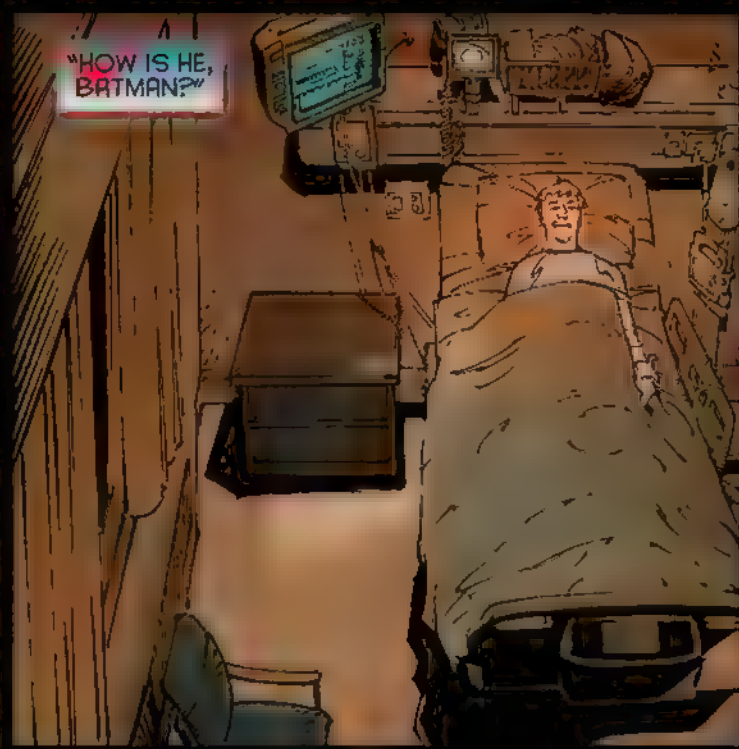
THERE'S NO COMPANY CALLED *GORDON* THAT HAS ANY CONNECTION TO RECORDING MATERIAL. THE LABEL IS *CUSTOM MADE*. NO CLUES ON IT BUT THE NAME ITSELF.

I'M TAKING YOU TO A BUNKER I KEEP, JIM.









"HOW IS HE, BATMAN?"



HE'S LOST A LOT OF BLOOD. I GAVE HIM A COAGULANT TO STOP HIM FROM BLEEDING OUT IN TIME, BUT THE THINNER JOKER USED IS A DERIVATIVE OF HEPARIN.



THAT'S ROUGH STUFF.

LUCKILY, JIM'S STABLE NOW. HE SHOULD BE ALL RIGHT.

I GOT YOUR MESSAGE. JOKER'S AFTER US ALL THIS TIME, EH? A FAMILY AFFAIR?



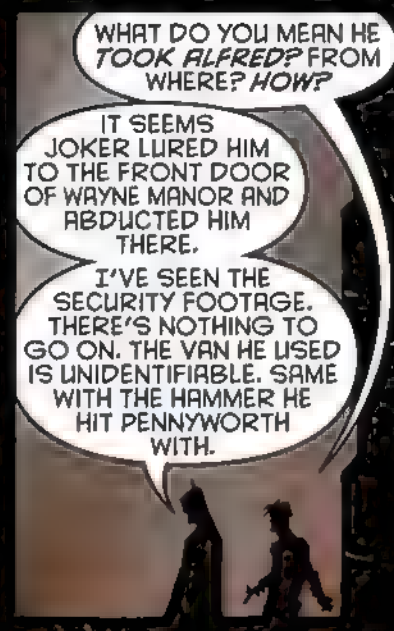
SO HE SAID.

AND COMMISSIONER GORDON IS FIRST ON THE LIS--

NIGHTWING, EARLIER TODAY THE JOKER... HE TOOK BRUCE WAYNE'S BUTLER.



... ALFRED?



WHAT DO YOU MEAN HE TOOK ALFRED? FROM WHERE? HOW?

IT SEEMS JOKER LURED HIM TO THE FRONT DOOR OF WAYNE MANOR AND ABDUCTED HIM THERE.

I'VE SEEN THE SECURITY FOOTAGE. THERE'S NOTHING TO GO ON. THE VAN HE USED IS UNIDENTIFIABLE. SAME WITH THE HAMMER HE HIT PENNYWORTH WITH.



HAMMER?! MY GOD. WHAT ARE WE GOING TO DO?
IF PENNYWORTH--

WILL YOU STOP WITH THE CODED TALK, PLEASE? NO ONE'S HERE! THIS IS ALFRED WE'RE TALKING ABOUT.

GOD, IS THAT WHY YOU WANTED TO TALK ABOUT IT HERE, IN PUBLIC, SO WE'D HAVE TO TALK IN CODE? SO YOU WOULDN'T HAVE TO DEAL WITH--

YOU THINK THIS IS EASY FOR ME, DICK?! THAT MAN RAISED ME. HE'S BEEN A FATHER TO ME FOR AS LONG AS I CAN REMEMBER. AND RIGHT NOW, THAT PSYCHOPATH HAS HIM.

I ASKED TO MEET HERE TO SAVE TIME! EVERY MINUTE WE LOSE, EVERY SECOND, ALFRED IS IN GREATER DANGER. YOU DON'T WANT TO USE CODE, FINE, I DON'T GIVE A DAMN ABOUT CODE, EITHER.



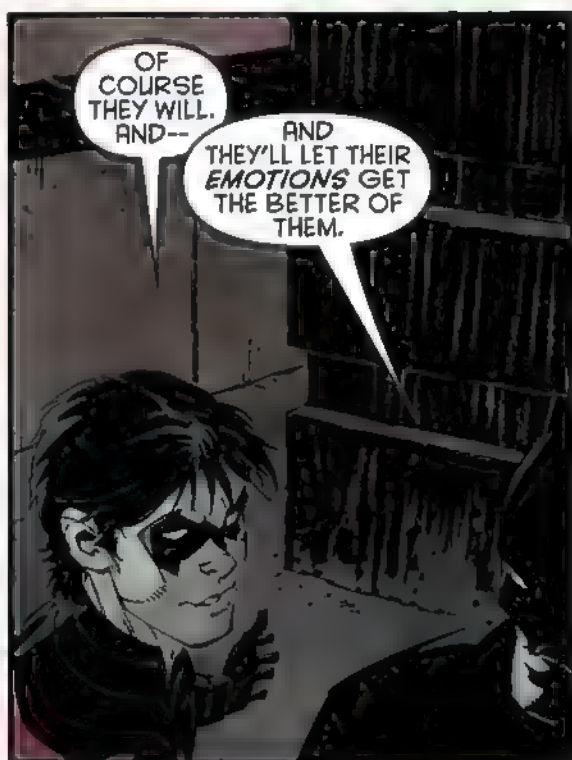
I'M SORRY, BRUCE. IT'S JUST...IT'S ALFRED.

I KNOW. WHICH IS WHY I'VE MADE THE DECISION NOT TO TELL THE REST OF THE FAMILY. YET.



WHAT?

THEY HEAR ALFRED IS MISSING, THEY'LL WANT TO COME AFTER JOKER HARD.



OF COURSE THEY WILL. AND--

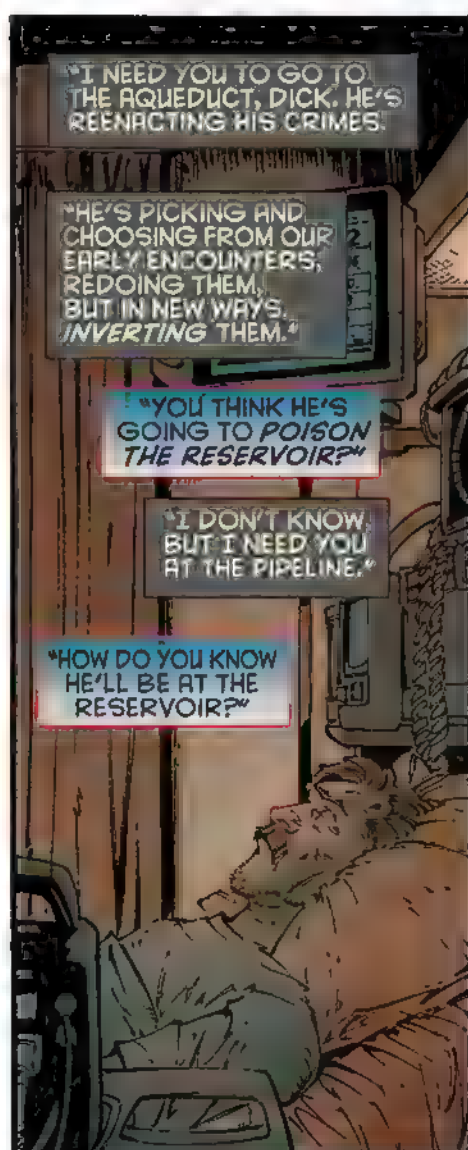
AND THEY'LL LET THEIR EMOTIONS GET THE BETTER OF THEM.



THEY'LL GO AFTER HIM AND HE'LL HAVE THE ADVANTAGE BECAUSE THEY WON'T BE IN CONTROL. HE ALREADY SAID IT, HE'S AFTER THEM, TOO. AND YOU.

YOU DON'T KNOW THAT THEY CAN'T HANDLE IT.

I CAN BARELY KEEP CONTROL MYSELF, DICK! AND I CAN'T TAKE THE RISK. I'M ASKING YOU TO KEEP THIS TO YOURSELF FOR NOW. I'M ASKING YOU TO HELP ME PROTECT THEM.



Don't think about it, Bruce.

Don't think about how quiet it is on the road tonight. Quiet because you're supposed to be talking to Alfred right now. It's when you always call him, on the way to battle.

If only you hadn't let the Joker get him, you'd be calling to tell him the facts of the case, to reassure him you'd be fine.

But not really. No, that's what you'd tell yourself the reason was.

But deep down you'd know you'd be calling to hear his voice. To be reass--

Stop it.

Focus on the case. The blood thinner Joker used on Gordon, the company that makes it also provides the chemicals to treat the reservoir.

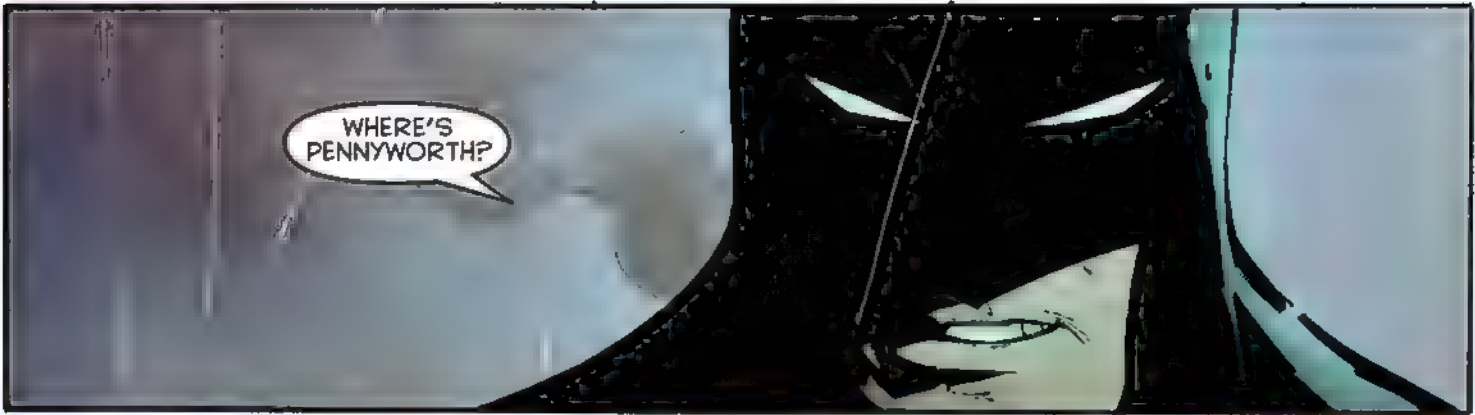
And the reservoir was the site of your first face-to-face fight with Joker. Your first real battle with him.

It was where you first saw him, really saw him, for who he was. Where you understood what you were facing in him.

And it was where he saw you back.

HELLO,
DARLING.

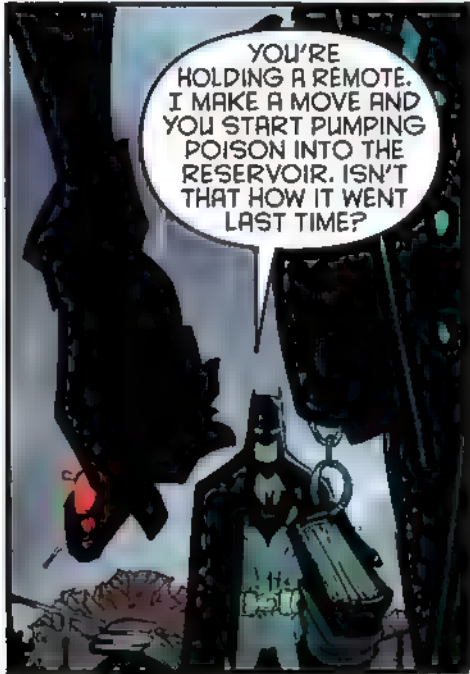




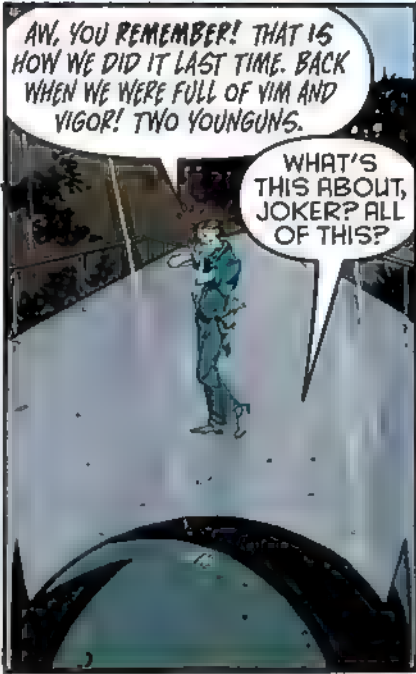
WHERE'S PENNYWORTH?



WHAT, NO HUG? NO KISSSES? NOT EVEN A BATARANG TO THE HEAD?



YOU'RE HOLDING A REMOTE. I MAKE A MOVE AND YOU START PUMPING POISON INTO THE RESERVOIR. ISN'T THAT HOW IT WENT LAST TIME?



AW, YOU REMEMBER! THAT IS HOW WE DID IT LAST TIME. BACK WHEN WE WERE FULL OF VIM AND VIGOR! TWO YOUNGUNS.

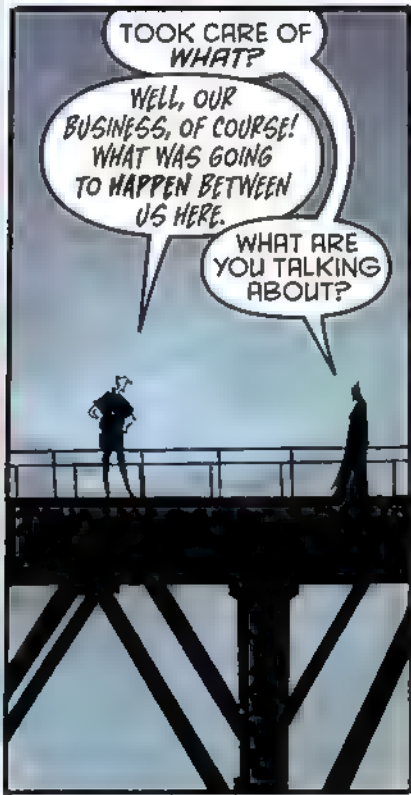
WHAT'S THIS ABOUT, JOKER? ALL OF THIS?



SEE, THAT'S THE THING, IT'S ALWAYS BUSINESS WITH US, LATELY. BUSINESS, BUSINESS, BUSINESS. SO THIS TIME, I TOOK CARE OF ALL THAT EARLY, SO WE CAN RELAX AND HAVE OURSELVES A NICE CHAT. FACE TO FACE...



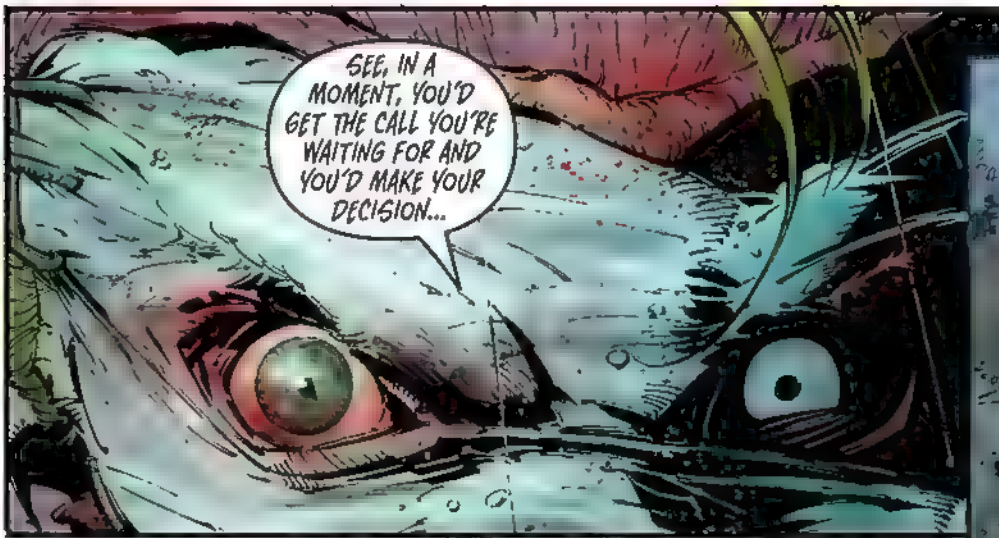
...TO FACE (HEE-HEE).



TOOK CARE OF WHAT?

WELL, OUR BUSINESS, OF COURSE! WHAT WAS GOING TO HAPPEN BETWEEN US HERE.

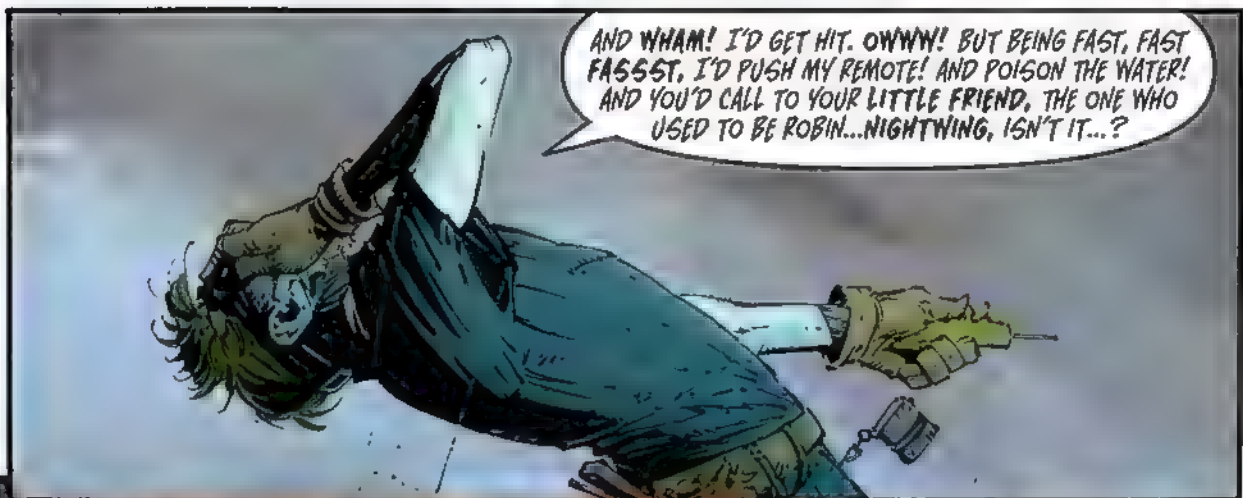
WHAT ARE YOU TALKING ABOUT?



SEE, IN A
MOMENT, YOU'D
GET THE CALL YOU'RE
WAITING FOR AND
YOU'D MAKE YOUR
DECISION...



...YOU'D DECIDE TO MAKE YOUR MOVE,
WOULDN'T YOU? YOU'D THROW THAT
BATARANG FROM BEHIND YOUR BACK
JUST LIKE LAST TIME!



AND WHAM! I'D GET HIT. OWWW! BUT BEING FAST, FAST
FASST, I'D PUSH MY REMOTE! AND POISON THE WATER!
AND YOU'D CALL TO YOUR LITTLE FRIEND, THE ONE WHO
USED TO BE ROBIN...NIGHTWING, ISN'T IT...?

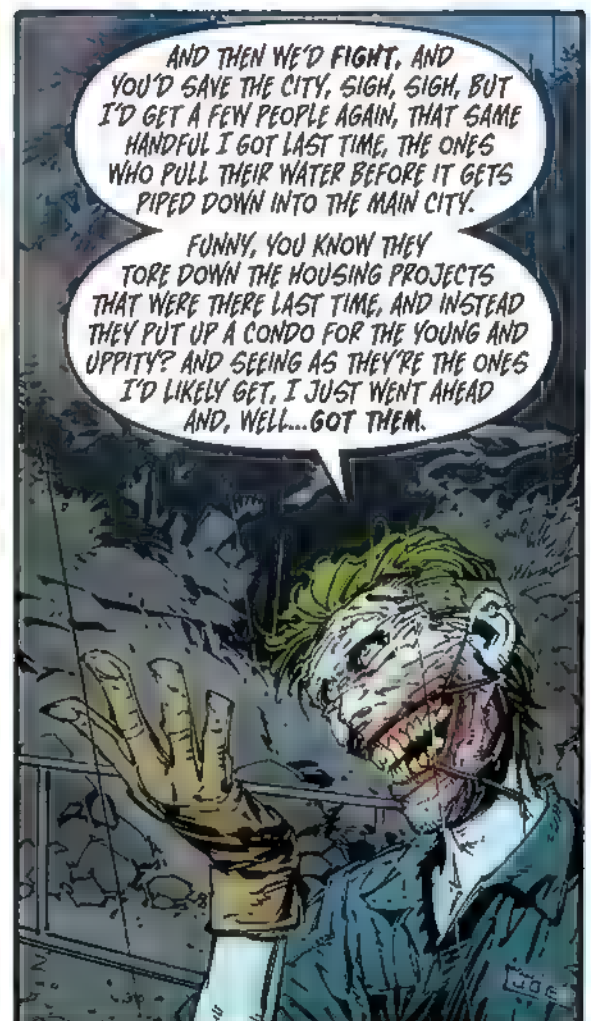


...AND HE'D BLOW
THE AQUEDUCT.

BATMAN,
I'M ARRIVING
AT--

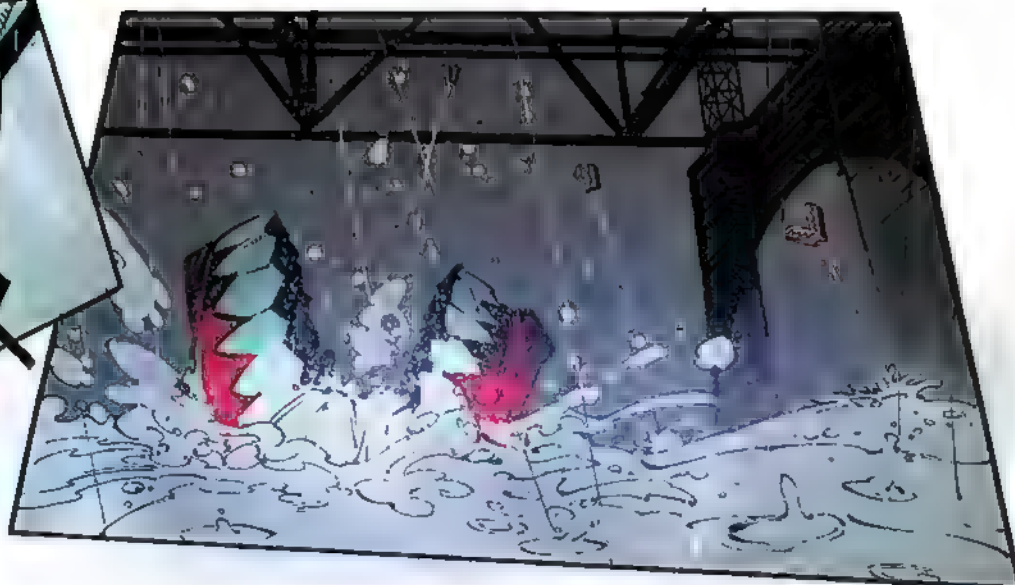
UNH!

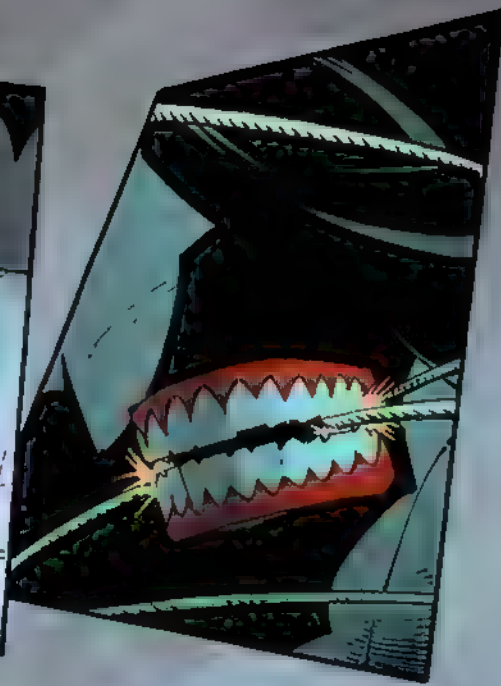
BOOM



AND THEN WE'D FIGHT, AND
YOU'D SAVE THE CITY, SIGH, SIGH, BUT
I'D GET A FEW PEOPLE AGAIN, THAT SAME
HANDFUL I GOT LAST TIME, THE ONES
WHO PULL THEIR WATER BEFORE IT GETS
PIPED DOWN INTO THE MAIN CITY.

FUNNY, YOU KNOW THEY
TORE DOWN THE HOUSING PROJECTS
THAT WERE THERE LAST TIME, AND INSTEAD
THEY PUT UP A CONDO FOR THE YOUNG AND
UPPITY? AND SEEING AS THEY'RE THE ONES
I'D LIKELY GET, I JUST WENT AHEAD
AND, WELL...GOT THEM.



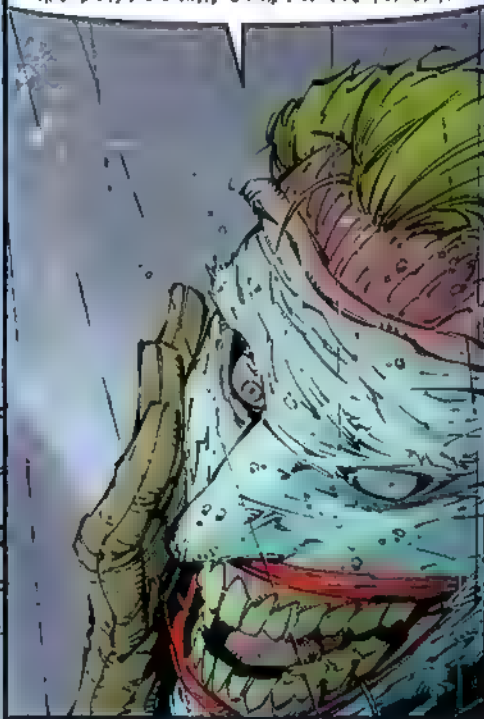


SEE? NOW WE
CAN CHAT. MY KING
AND I.

YOU'RE
NOTHING TO
ME BUT--

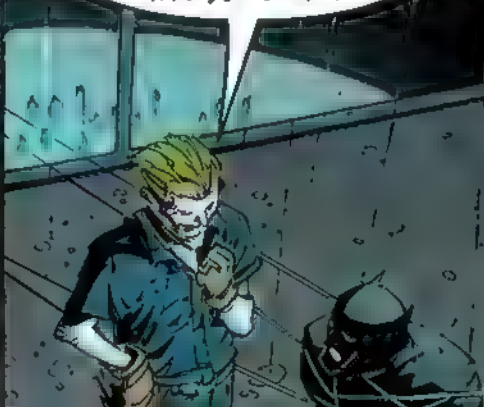
SHHH. DON'T DO
THAT. DON'T PRETEND. NOT
HERE. NOT TO ME, YOUR FAITHFUL
COURT JESTER. AND WHAT DOES
THE JESTER DO, IF NOT DELIVER
NEWS TO THE KING? BAD NEWS,
ESPECIALLY. THE WORST! THE FLEET
HAS HOLES. THE ARMY'S TURNED
PACIFIST! THE CHILDREN'S
HANDS HAVE ROTTED OFF AND
THEY CAN'T CLAP FOR
THE FAIRIES!

BECAUSE THE JESTER'S THE ONLY ONE HE'LL
HEAR IT FROM, THE ONE WHO CAN MAKE HIM
LAUGH AT IT, AT HIMSELF. AND THAT'S WHAT
I'VE TRIED TO DO FOR YOU, BATS, DELIVER THE
WORST NEWS OF YOUR HEART, DIRECTLY TO YOU.
AND BOY, DO I HAVE SOME FOR YOU TONIGHT.



SO LET'S CUE THE MUSIC AND THE LIGHTS
AND--AHM, AHM-- I'LL CLEAR MY THROAT
AND SPEAK AS LOUDLY AS I CAN.

I'M EVEN GOING
TO SAY IT SO YOUR LITTLE
BAT-FAMILY CAN HEAR IT, TOO--OVER
THE POLICE WIRE. SO ARE YOU THERE?
ARE YOU LISTENING, LITTLE BAT-
KIDDIES? GOOD...



...BECAUSE
I KNOW WHO
YOU ARE!

ALL OF YOU, BATMAN AND
COMPANY, BENEATH YOUR LITTLE
MASKSSSS! THAT'S RIGHT. I KNOW
YOUR LITTLE SECRET IDENTITIES! I KNOW
YOUR NAMES, YOUR ADDRESSES... HECK, I
EVEN KNOW WHICH SOAP YOU EACH USE IN THE
SHOWER (AND WHY YOU ALWAYS SMELL
SO GOOD, NIGHTWING!).

AND NOW
THAT I KNOW YOU ALL, I
MEAN REALLY KNOW YOU?
I HAVE TO SAY...

...YOU
SURE ARE A BUNCH
OF S**%!@*!'S!
HAHAHAHAHA!

YOU'RE
FAKERS. IMPOSTORS.
PHONIES.

LIKE GORDON. YOUR
FRIEND, GORDON. HE SEEMS
STRONG, BUT DEEP DOWN, NO NO NO.
HE'S A BLEEDER, YOU SEE? HE
BLEEDS FOR EVERYONE, THE CITY,
HIS MEN, HIS DAUGHTER... A
TENDER BLEEDER. PHONY.

NOW I WAS
JUST TOYING WITH
HIM, BUT YOU ALL,
I'M COMING FOR YOU,
ONE BY ONE, HEE HEE...
BECAUSE YOU'RE THE
REAL BAD ONES. THE
TRUE VILLAINS.

THE ONES WHO'VE
RUINED MY DEAR KING.
I MEAN, LOOK AT HIM!
HE CAN'T EVEN CAGE
A FEW OLD OWLS
WITHOUT YOUR HELP
ANYMORE.

HE KNOWS IT, TOO. HE KNOWS WHAT YOU'RE DOING
TO HIM. WHICH IS WHY HE'S KEEPING A SECRET FROM
YOU. SOMETHING JUST BETWEEN ME AND HIM.

THE SECRET THAT LET ME LEARN IT ALL.
LEARN IT AND WRITE IT DOWN IN THIS BOOK.
A BOOK MADE FROM THE SKIN OF A BAT, FROM
THAT DEAR LITTLE CAVE YOU ALL HIDE IN.

YOU'RE
LYING.

"OH, AM I? WELL, I GUESS WE'LL SEE,
WON'T WE! BUT I'LL TELL YOU THIS, LITTLE
BATS AND BIRDS--WITHIN SEVENTY-TWO
HOURS, YOU'LL ALL BE DEAD.

"AND HERE'S THE
PUNCH LINE...
BATMAN HERE WILL
BE THE ONE WHO
KILLS YOU!"

NEXT: THE JOKER MAKES THINGS PERSONAL...

MEN OF WORSHIP

STARRING
JOKER
& THE PENGUIN

SCOTT
SNYDER &
JAMES
TYNION IV
WRITERS
JOCK
ARTWORK
DAVE BARON
COLORS
SAL
CIPRIANO
LETTERS
KATIE
KUBERT
ASSISTANT
EDITOR
MIKE
MARTS
EDITOR

WHAT KIND
OF PLACE IS
THIS FOR A
SIT-DOWN,
BOSS?

OUTSIDE THE CITY LIMITS,
FAR FROM PRYING EYES AND
COSTUMED IDIOTS...

...IT'S AN
INSPIRED
CHOICE,
ACTUALLY.

NOW, I DON'T WANT
TO LEAVE OGILVY
RUNNING THE CASINO
FOR MORE THAN AN
HOUR, SO LET'S GET
THIS OVER...

...WITH.



THEY...
THEY'RE *ALL DEAD*,
MR. COBBLEPOT!

I CAN SEE
THAT FOR *MYSELF*,
YOU IMBECILE. FAN
OUT QUICK! FIND
WHOEVER DID
THIS!



THESE ARE TOP LIEUTENANTS OF EVERY
CRIME FAMILY IN GOTHAM.

HRM. THIS IS GOING
TO GET *MESSY*.



OOOOHH,
YES.



→GLUK←

VERY
MESSY.



YOU SHOULD HAVE TOLD ME AAAAAGES AGO HOW MUCH FUN IT IS TO KILL A MAN WITH AN UMBRELLA!

IT KEPT KILLING ALL THESE MEN FROM GETTING SO VERY TEEEDIOUS...

IT'LL BE ESPECIALLY FUN WHEN ALL THEIR BOSSSES FIND OUT NOW THEY DIED!

GEE, I WONDER WHO COULD HAVE DONE THAT? WHAT RIVAL CRIME BOSS HAS A WHOLE BUNCHA DEATH UMBRELLAS!

HAHAHAHAHA

THIS IS GOING TO MEAN A FULL-SCALE WAR, JOKER. DO YOU HAVE ANY IDEA WHAT THIS COULD COST ME?

AWWW, OZZY, DON'T BE MAD. I'M JUST TRYING TO HELP YOU!

THESE SCHMOES? THEY'RE FAKERS, OZZY. THEY DON'T SEE THE CITY LIKE YOU AND ME. THEY DON'T KNOW WHY WHAT THEY'RE DOING IS REALLY IMPORTANT.

I WOULDN'T HAVE GUESSED YOU'D EVER GIVE ORGANIZED CRIME A SECOND THOUGHT.

OH, I DON'T. NOT REALLY. PERSONALLY, I FIND ORGANIZATION TAKES SO MUCH OF THE FUN OUT OF CRIME!

BUT IN HIS KINGDOM...IT'S A NECESSARY BRAND OF EVIL. AND YOU DO IT BETTER THAN ANYONE.

YOU KNOW IT'S ALL ABOUT HIM.

THESE PETTY CRIMINALS, THE ROBBERS AND MUGGERS AND KILLERS AND TRAFFICKERS...THEY FEED HIM. THEY GIVE HIM PURPOSE. THEY WORSHIP AND FEAR THE BAT LIKE THE GODKING HE IS.

CUZ THAT'S WHAT IT IS, OZZY! WORSHIP. CRIME IS THE RELIGION THAT KEEPS HIS CITY ALIVE!

AND YOU KEEP THEM FEARFUL, YOU KEEP HIM STRONG...

YOU'RE THE BISHOP IN HIS DARK KINGDOM AND YOU KNOW HOW BEST TO LEAD HIS PARISHIONERS.


SO LEAAAD THEM, OZZY!

I TOOK THE FIRST STEPS, ALREADY! NOW YOU JUST HAVE TO WIPE OUT THE REST AND RULE THIS CITY LIKE YOU'VE ALWAYS WANTED.


IF I'M THE BISHOP, WHAT DOES THAT MAKE YOU? THE ANTI-CHRIST?

HAHAHAHA! JUST FOR THAT, HOW'S ABOUT I GIVE YOU A LITTLE CHOICE. LET'S SAY I TAKE CREDIT FOR THIS WHOLE SORDID SCENE.


HECK, I'LL EVEN LICK THOSE BLOODY UMBRELLAS CLEAN SO THE DNA POINTS RIGHT TO ME.



AND LET ME GUESS. IN RETURN, YOU GET A FAVOR...WHAT IS IT THIS TIME, JOKER? GUNS? BOMBS? ALL THOSE *RARE* CHEMICALS YOU NEED FOR YOUR GAS?




OH, NO, OZZY...NOTHING LIKE THAT.



I'M JUST THROWING A SPECIAL LITTLE GET-TOGETHER, YOU SEE...AND I WANTED TO DROP OFF AN INVITATION.

AND IF I REFUSE?



MAN THE TORPEDOES, MEN! WE'RE GOING TO WAR!

HAHAHAHAAA



ALL RIGHT, JOKER...I'M LISTENING.

TO BE CONTINUED...

MOTHER...?

MOM?!


Oh, my
God.

What just
happened?



KLIK

Oh, no.

Can't... breathe.

Is this what a panic attack feels like?

Oh, god, Mom.

Calm down, Barbara Gordon.

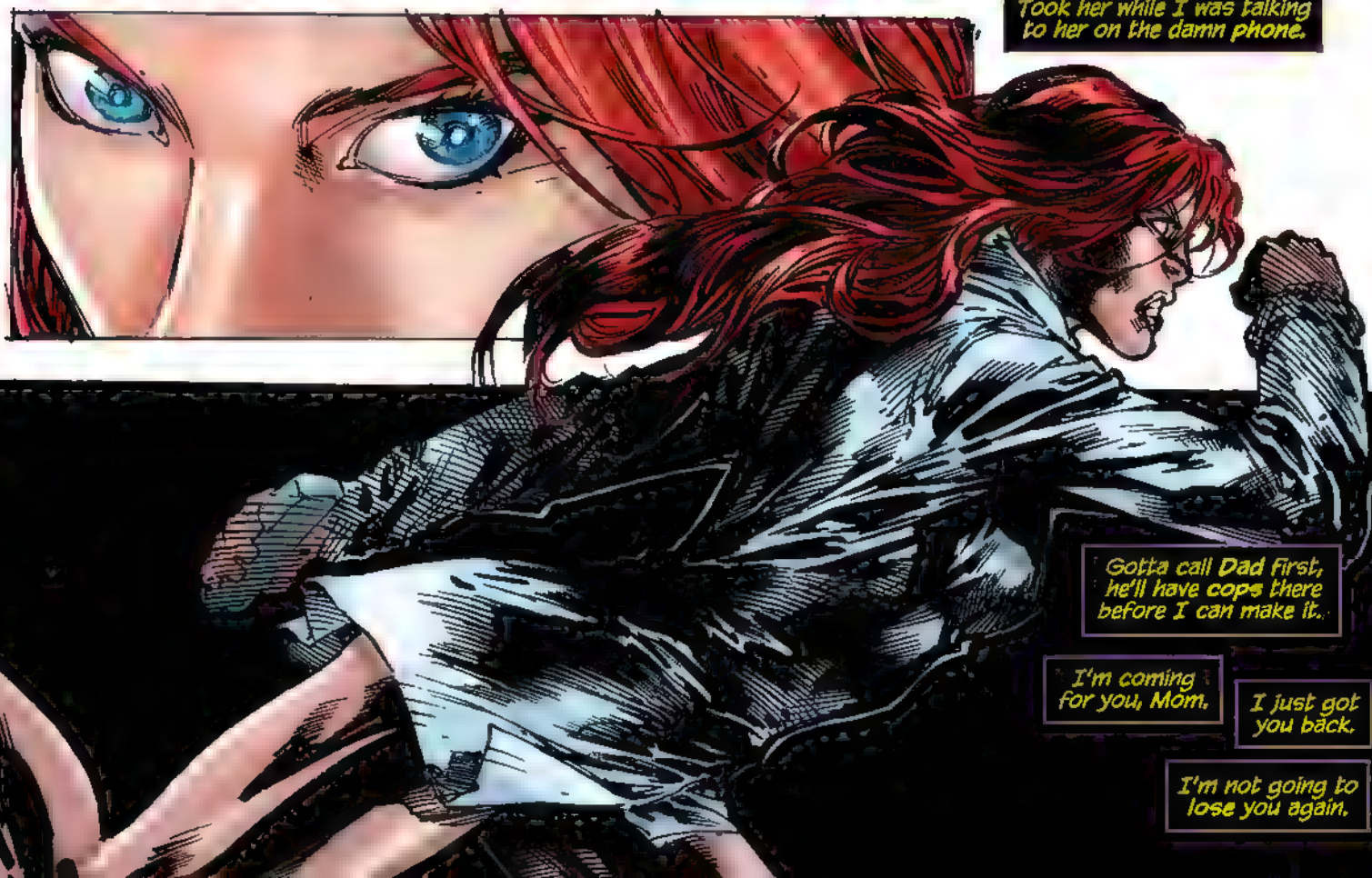
You...you can't help her if you can't focus.

Okay.

Okay.

Someone bad has my mother.

Took her while I was talking to her on the damn phone.

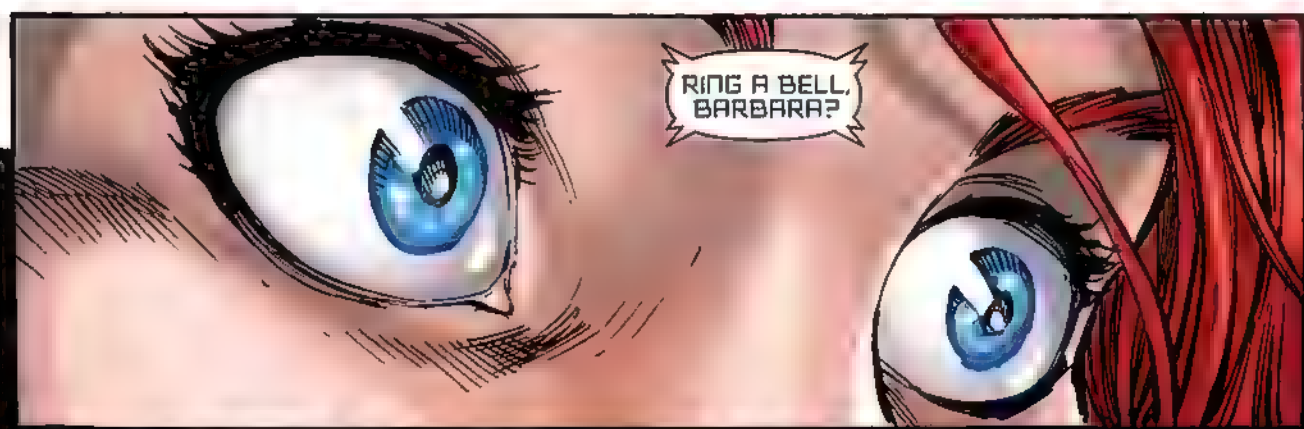
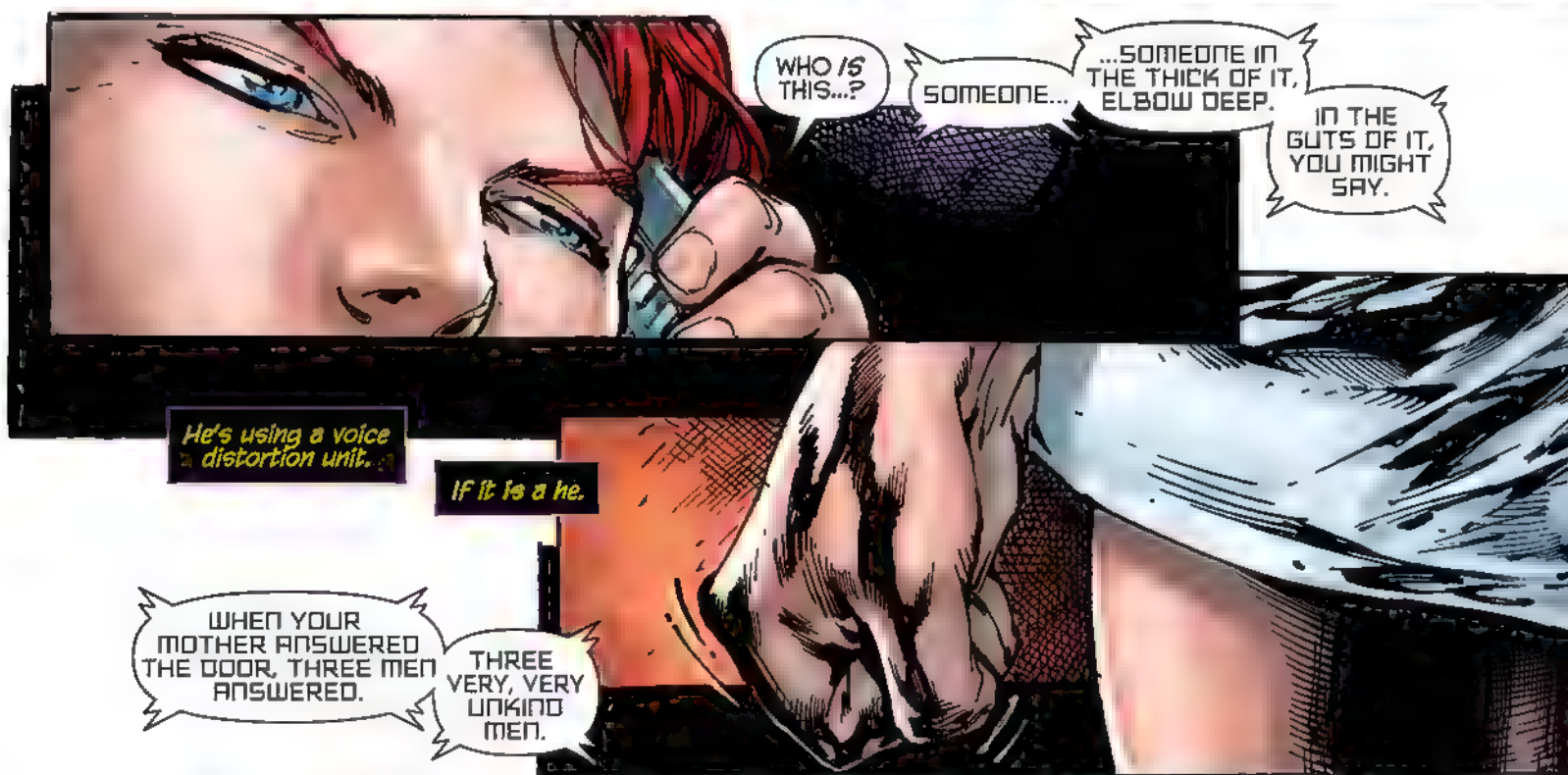
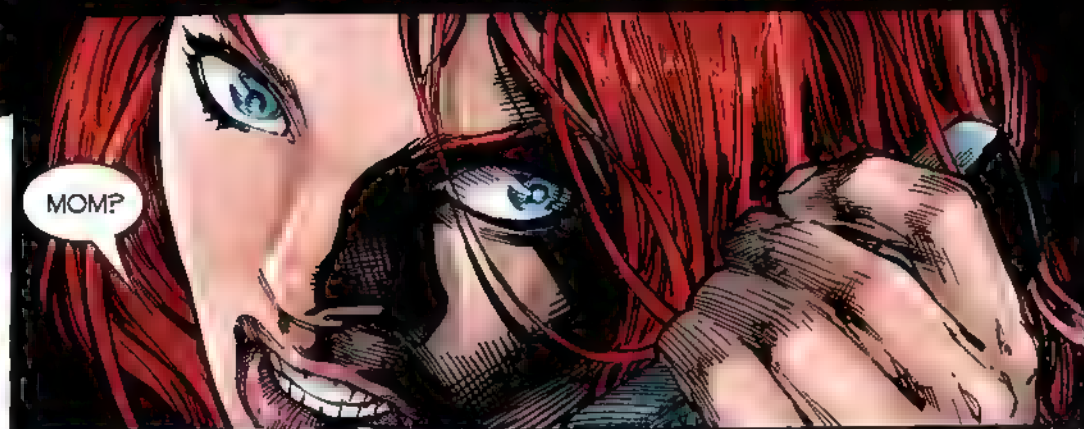


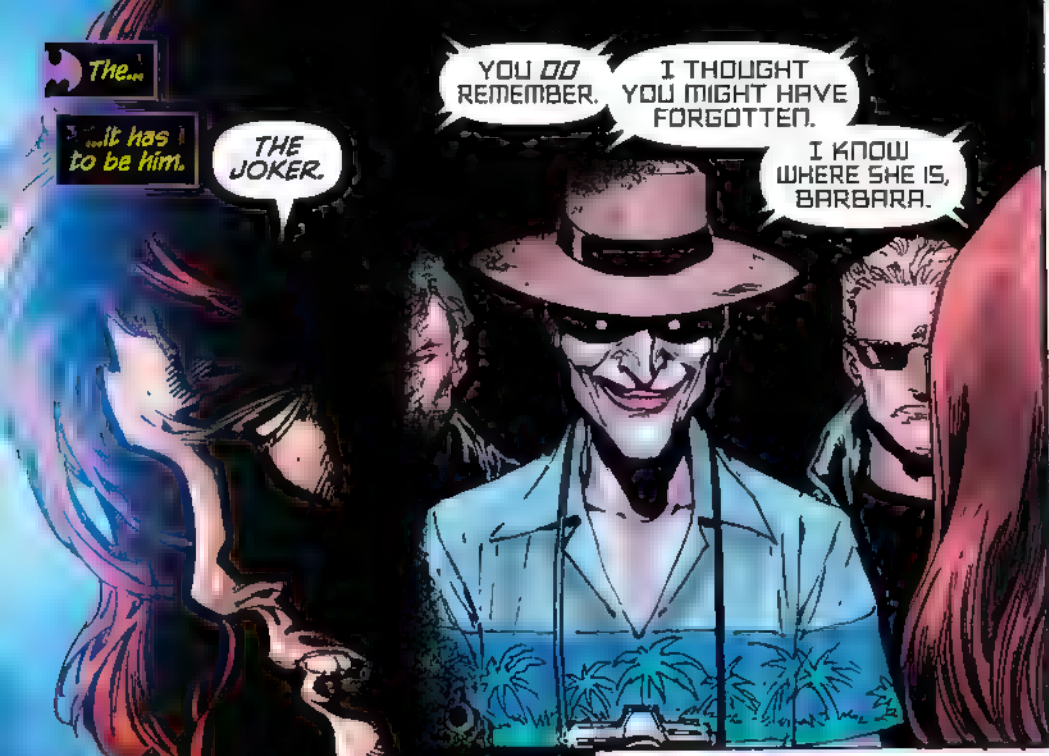
Gotta call Dad first, he'll have cops there before I can make it.

I'm coming for you, Mom.

I just got you back.

I'm not going to lose you again.





The...
...it has
to be him.

THE
JOKER.

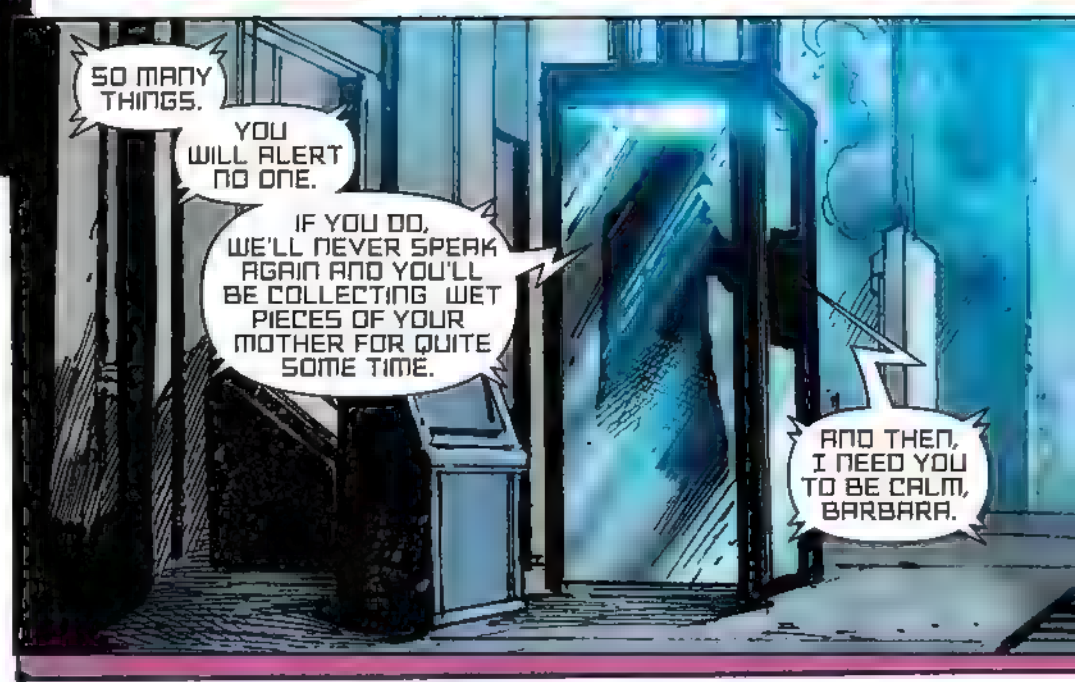
YOU DO
REMEMBER.

I THOUGHT
YOU MIGHT HAVE
FORGOTTEN.

I KNOW
WHERE SHE IS,
BARBARA.



...
WHAT
DO YOU
WANT?

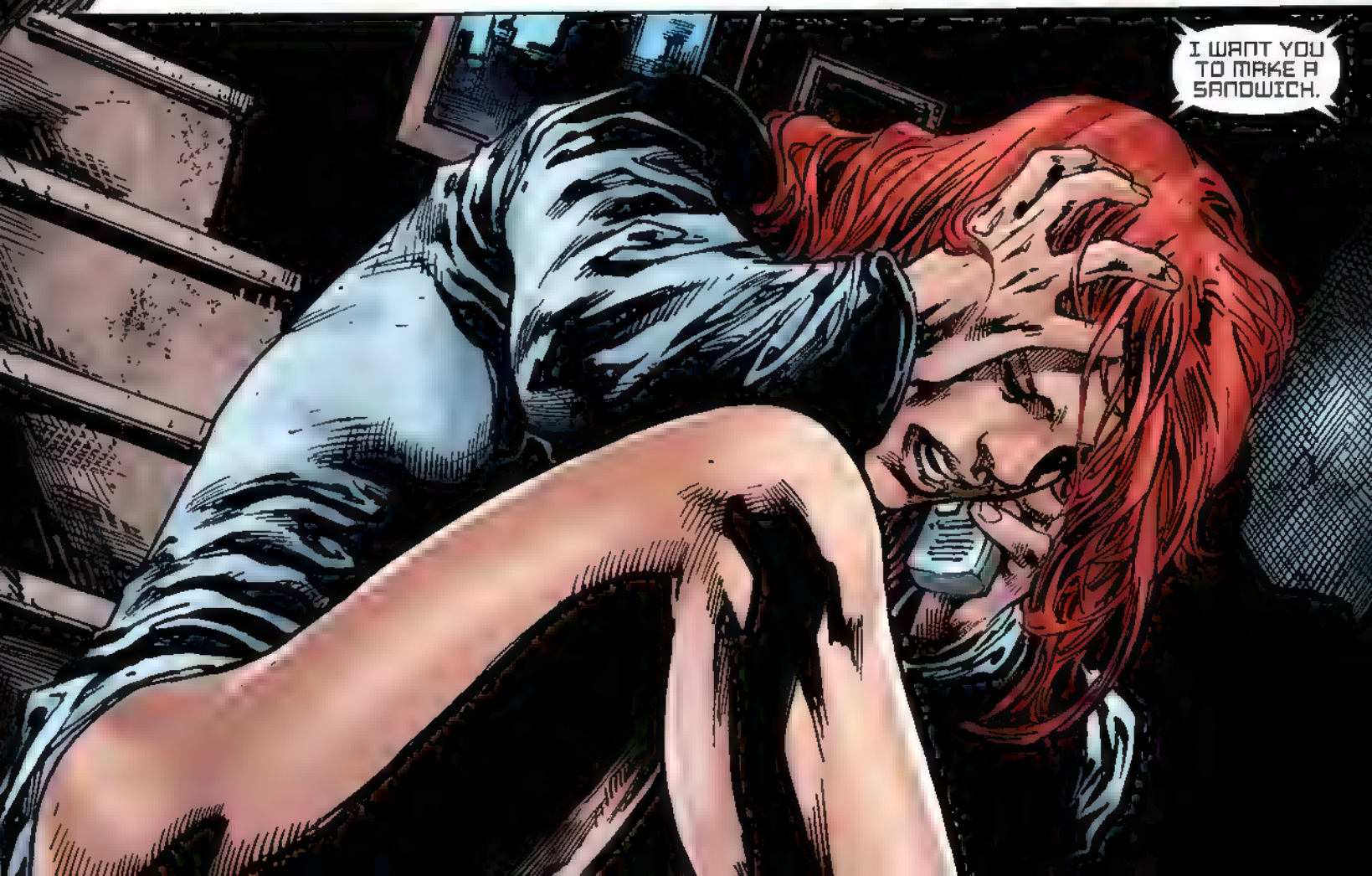


SO MANY
THINGS.

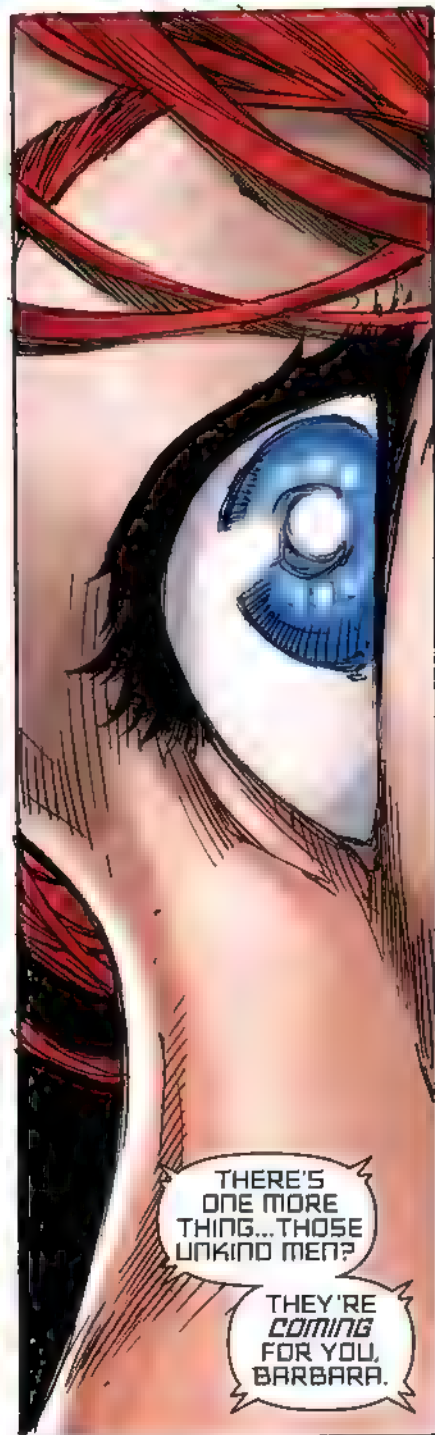
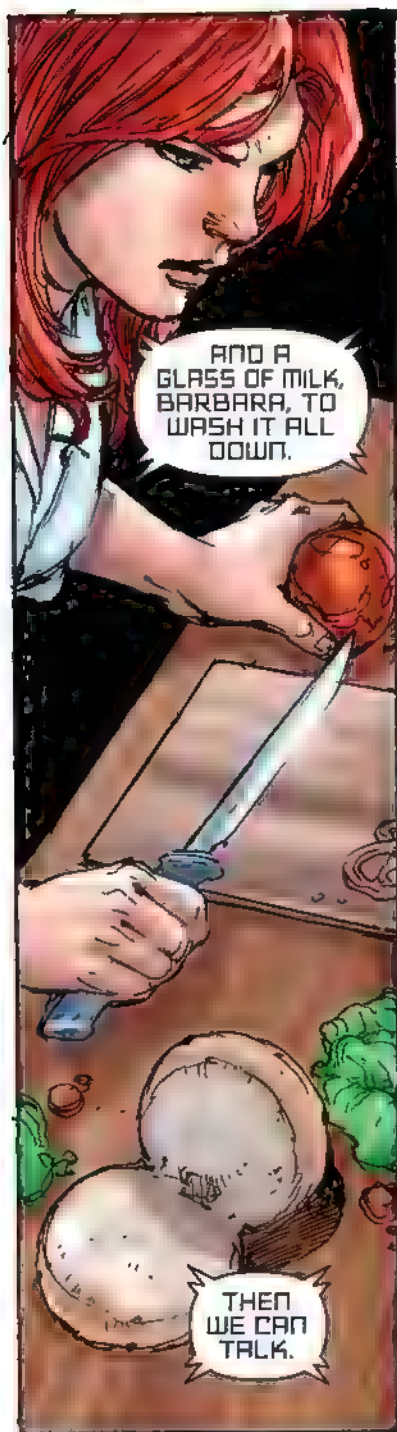
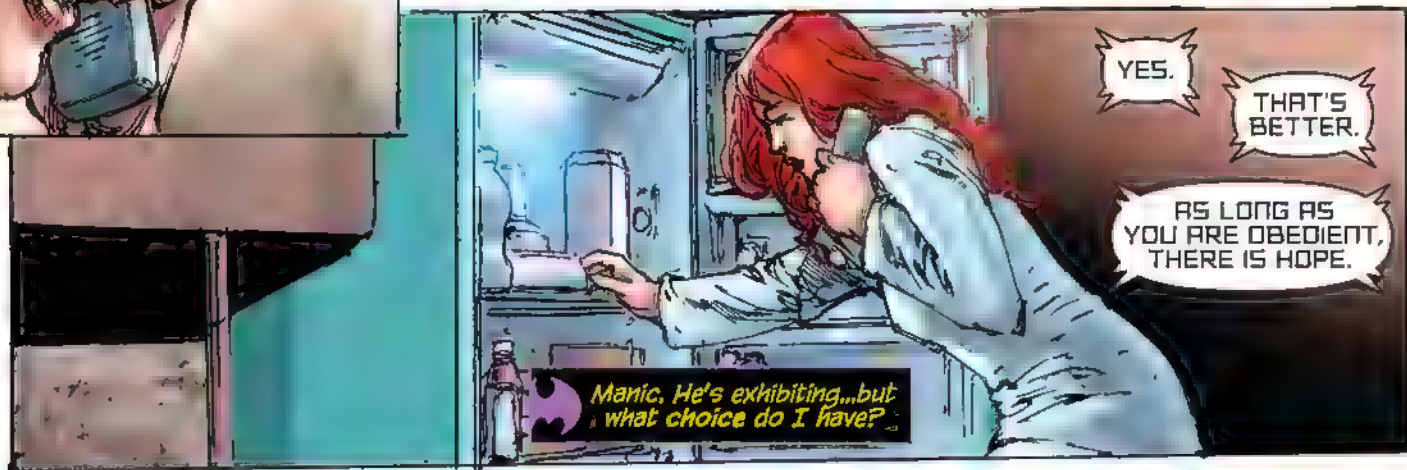
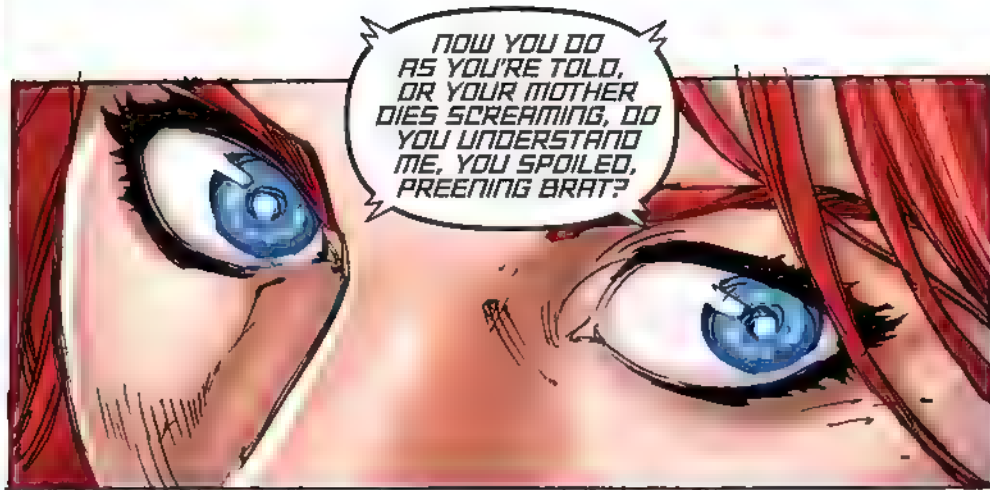
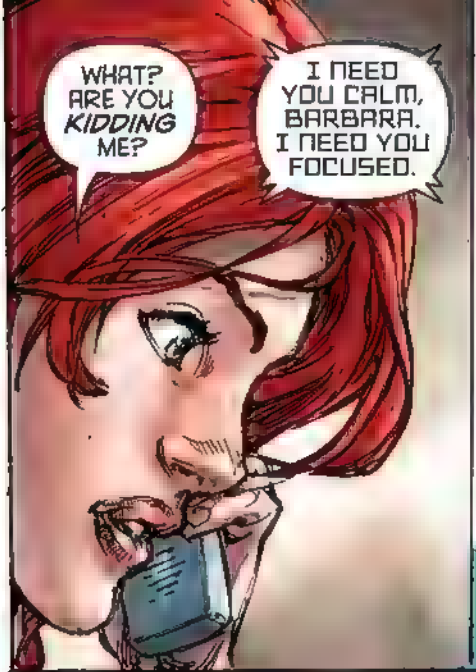
YOU
WILL ALERT
NO ONE.


IF YOU DO,
WE'LL NEVER SPEAK
AGAIN AND YOU'LL
BE COLLECTING WET
PIECES OF YOUR
MOTHER FOR QUITE
SOME TIME.

AND THEN,
I NEED YOU
TO BE CALM,
BARBARA.



I WANT YOU
TO MAKE A
SANDWICH.





Again. The day I
opened the door.

The day the Joker
shot me. In my
own home.

The last day I
stood on my own
feet for years.

It's
happening
again.

And for a
moment...

...I let go of everything
I've built since then.

It's a
dream.

I dreamed of the surgery.
I dreamed of the recovery.

Only the pain is
real. Only the fear.

I am still
paralyzed.

That's...

...no.

They're
laughing
at me.

That was a
different time.

That was a
younger me.





Who's laughing now, Joker?

WHAT THE HELL?
SHOOT HER!



They're in my home.
And he knows I'm Batgirl, apparently.

>GGN<

The life I thought I was going to live?

It's over.
It's done.



Okay. So it's over.

I've been fighting sick people, people who were broken.

These men choose to work for him.

THE BOSS WANTS HER BREATHING, YOU IDIOT.

AAAAAACKKKK



And that means I can inflict enough pain to make them remember it for the rest of their miserable lives.

KRAKKK



THAT'S ENOUGH, YOU LITTLE BI--



I've dreamed of a moment like this ten thousand times.

SNAP



They thought I'd be terrified, I'm sure.

Beyond repair, maybe. Victim of a full traumatic breakdown.

And yet, I find I am something else entirely.

Something darker.

Elated.

MY LEG.

AH, MAN, YOU RUINED MY LEG.

I know the feeling.



NNFFF.

STOP IT
STOP IT
STOP IT.

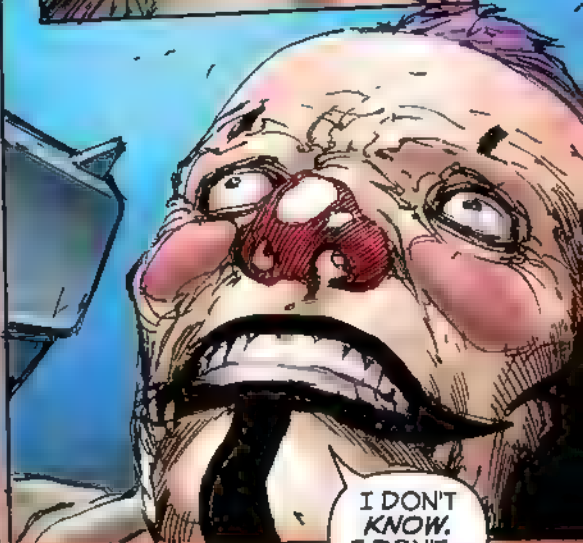


WAIT. WAIT!
WHAT ARE YOU DOING?

MAYBE YOU'RE NEW.
MAYBE YOU DON'T KNOW WHAT HE DID TO ME.
BUT I HAVE TO BE HONEST.



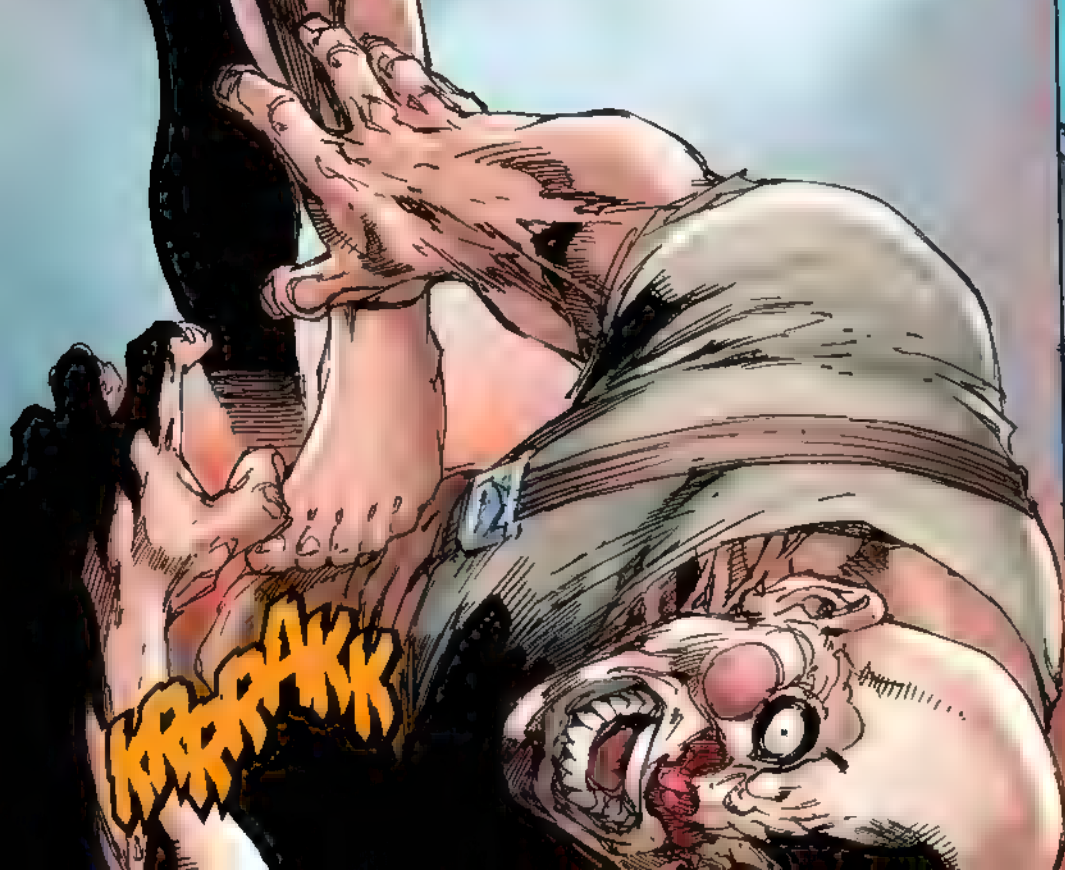
I'M HOLDING A BIT OF A GRUDGE.
WHERE'S MY MOTHER?



I DON'T KNOW. I DON'T... PLEASE.

FOR THE LOVE OF GOD.

HE DOESN'T TELL US ANYTHING.



KRRRAKK

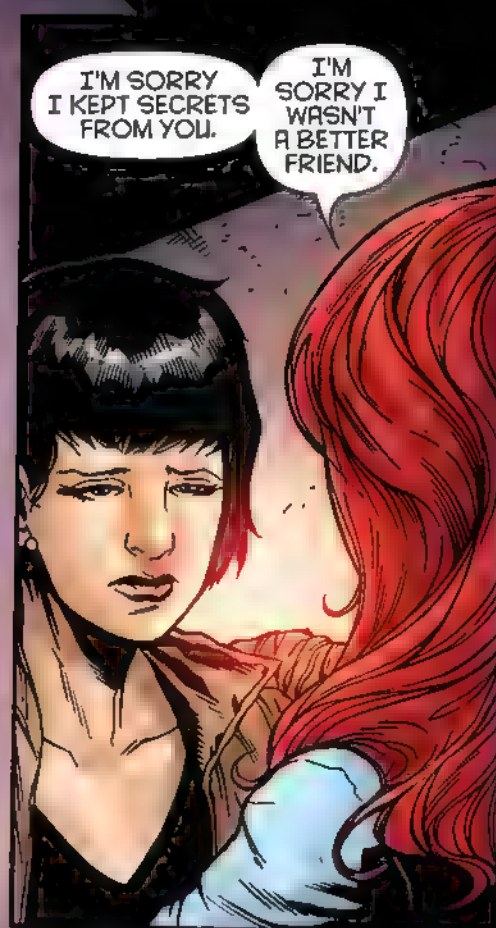




ALYSIA.

I'M SO SORRY.

BARBARA,
YOU HAVE TO LET
ME KNOW WHAT'S
HAPPENING!



I'M SORRY
I KEPT SECRETS
FROM YOU.

I'M
SORRY I
WASN'T
A BETTER
FRIEND.



I NEED YOU
TO GO TO THE
POLICE PRECINCT.
NOW.

DON'T TAKE
ANYTHING BUT
THE CAT.

TELL THEM
THERE WAS A
HOME INVASION.
BUT **NOTHING**
ELSE.

DO YOU
UNDERSTAND?

I'M NEVER COMING BACK.
WE'RE NEVER GOING TO SEE
EACH OTHER AGAIN.

I WANT YOU
TO FORGET YOU
EVER **KNEW** ME.

BUT...

BARBARA,
WHATEVER'S
HAPPENING,
I CAN **HELP**.

TAKE
ME **WITH**
YOU.



I'M SORRY,
ALYSIA.

GOODBYE.

I was a fool to think it was over.

What right did I have, to put innocent people I care about in his proximity?

Sometimes, you never wake up.

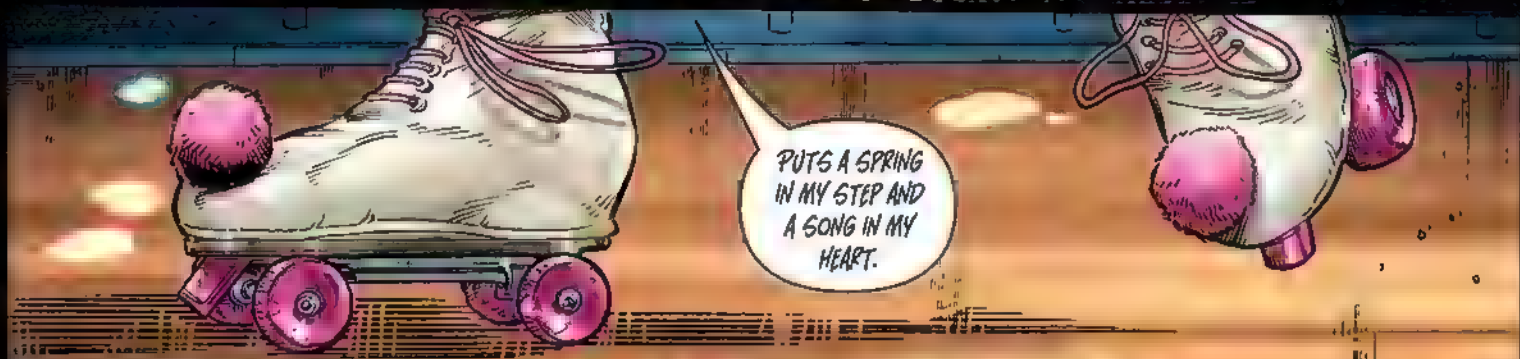
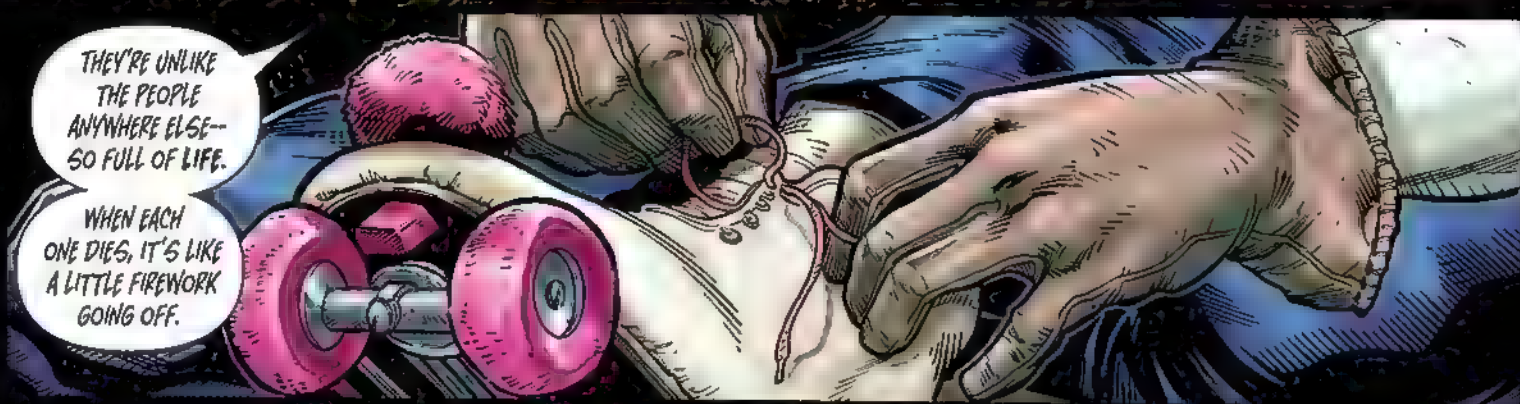
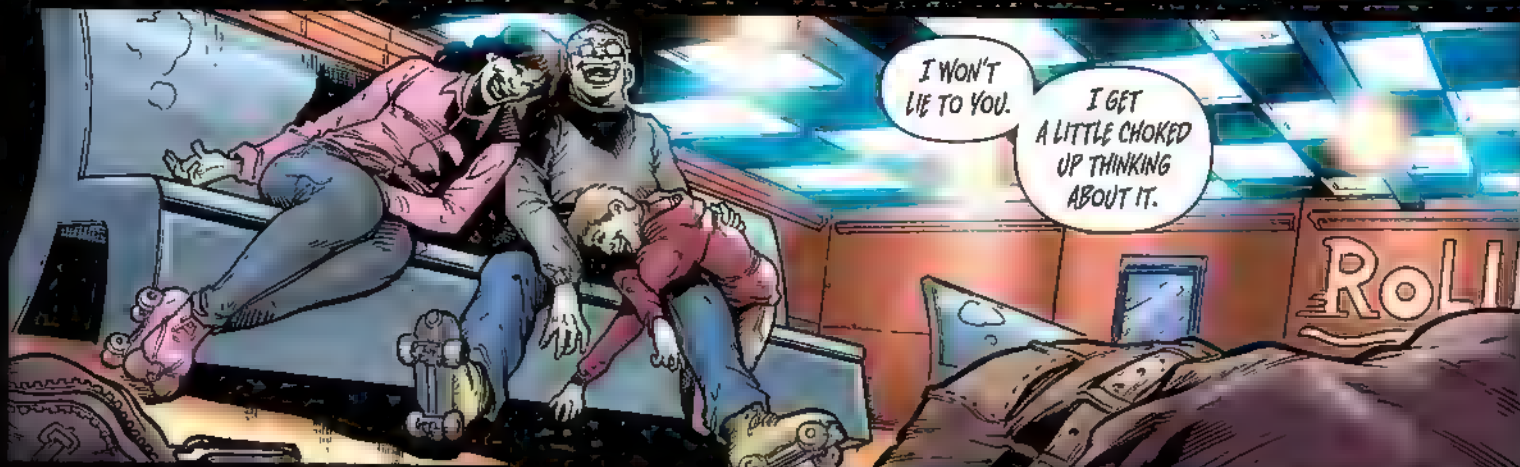
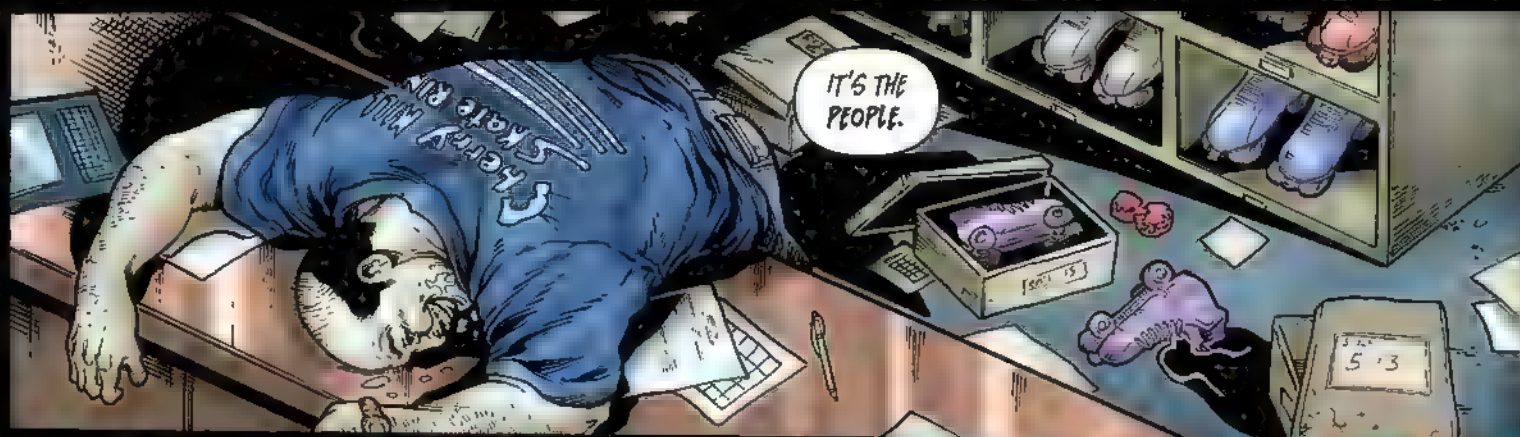


Sometimes, the nightmare never ends.

YOU KNOW WHAT I LOVE ABOUT GOTHAM CITY?

DO YOU KNOW WHAT I TRULY, TRULY LOVE?

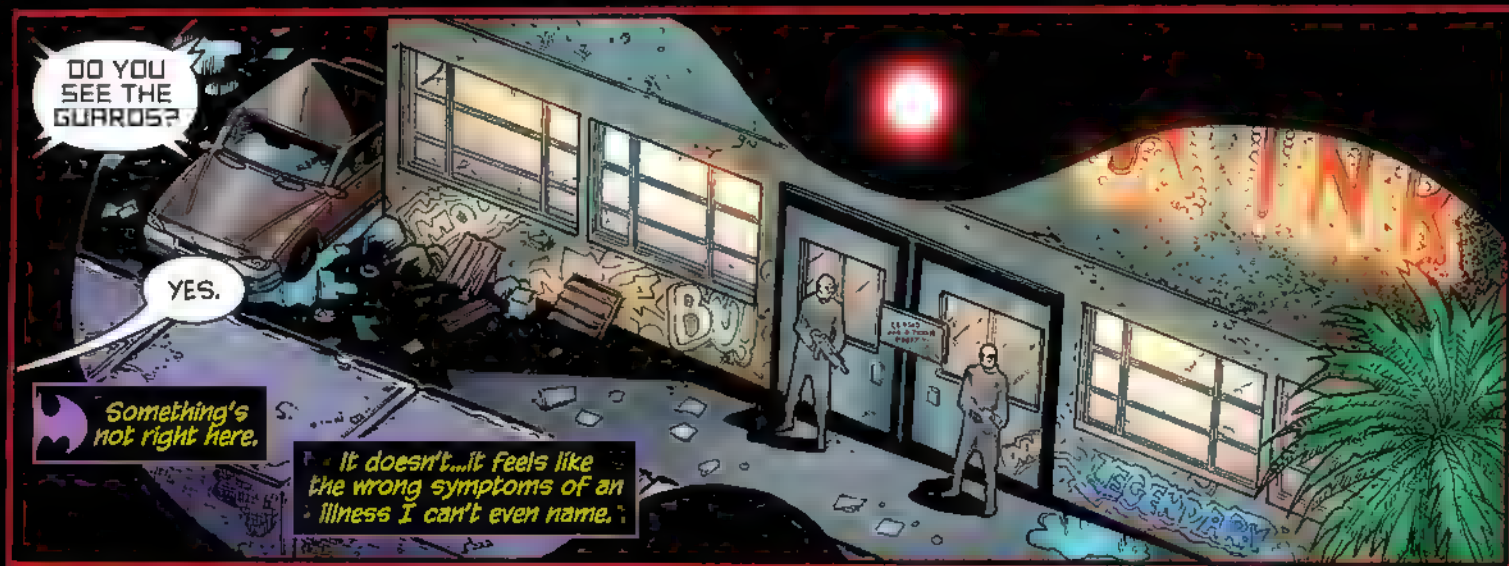






BUT I'M
BACK IN
GOTHAM, MRS.
GORDON.

AND I HAVE
SUCH LOVELY
HOPES FOR
THE FUTURE.



DO YOU
SEE THE
GUARDS?

YES.

Something's
not right here.

It doesn't...it feels like
the wrong symptoms of an
illness I can't even name.



WHY ARE
YOU DOING
THIS?

WHY MY
MOTHER?



THAT'S
THE RIGHT
QUESTION.

BUT YOU
WOULD NEVER
UNDERSTAND THE
ANSWER,
BARBARA.



OH, IT'S ALL
SKATE TIME,
DEAR MRS.
GORDON.

I'M AFRAID
YOU'RE BEING A
BIT OF A PARTY
POOPER.

PLEASE
DON'T RUIN
MY SPECIAL
NIGHT.

YOU KNOW HOW I HATE
UNPLEASANTNESS.

Heart rate's elevated.
Breathing's erratic
and labored.

And my hands
are shaking.

This is the man
who took my spine.

But it's not fear.
I know what fear
tastes like.



It's
rage.

And I'm not sure
I can control it.



I don't much like it.

But I don't know that I can stop it.

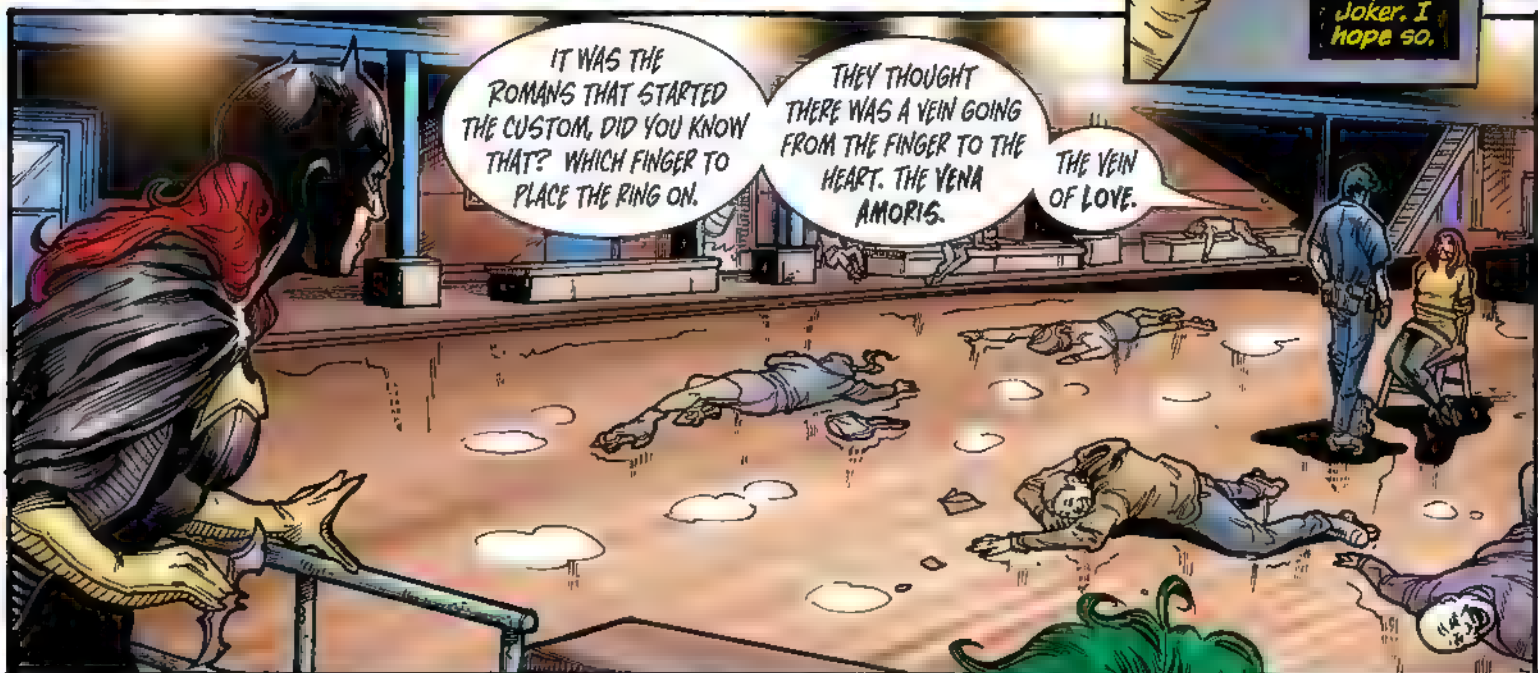
AH.

I KNEW IF I DID ENOUGH CANVASSING IN YOUR AREA, YOU'D COME VISIT.

IT'S A MAGICAL EVENING, ISN'T IT, BATGIRL?



I hope so, Joker. I hope so.



IT WAS THE ROMANS THAT STARTED THE CUSTOM, DID YOU KNOW THAT? WHICH FINGER TO PLACE THE RING ON.

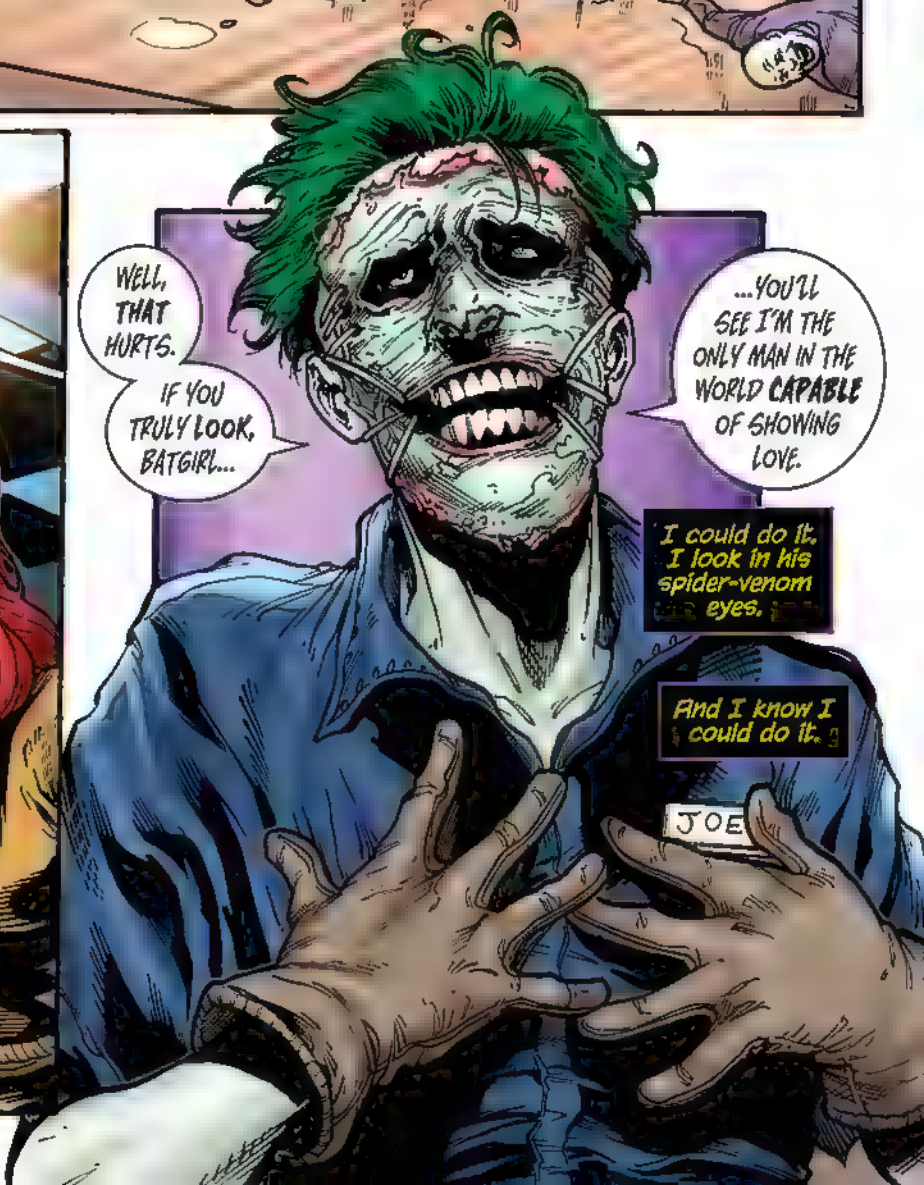
THEY THOUGHT THERE WAS A VEIN GOING FROM THE FINGER TO THE HEART. THE VENA AMORIS.

THE VEIN OF LOVE.



DON'T USE THAT WORD, JOKER.

YOU DON'T KNOW ANYTHING ABOUT LOVE.



WELL, THAT HURTS.

IF YOU TRULY LOOK, BATGIRL...

...YOU'LL SEE I'M THE ONLY MAN IN THE WORLD CAPABLE OF SHOWING LOVE.

I could do it. I look in his spider-venom eyes.

And I know I could do it.

JOE

I could kill the Joker.

Once and for all, I could kill this man.



WHY, IT'S BECAUSE OF LOVE I HOPED YOU'D COME, DEAR THING.

HOPED?

YOU GAVE ME DIRECTIONS BY PHONE.

I'M AFRAID SOMEONE'S PULLING YOUR LEG, DARLING.

I HAVEN'T TOUCHED A PHONE IN MONTHS.

What? It wasn't him?

Then, who...?



I'M SORRY I DECEIVED YOU, BARBARA.

BUT I CAN'T VERY WELL ALLOW THIS HIDEOUS CREATURE TO HARM OUR MOTHER, CAN I?

My Brother.

James.

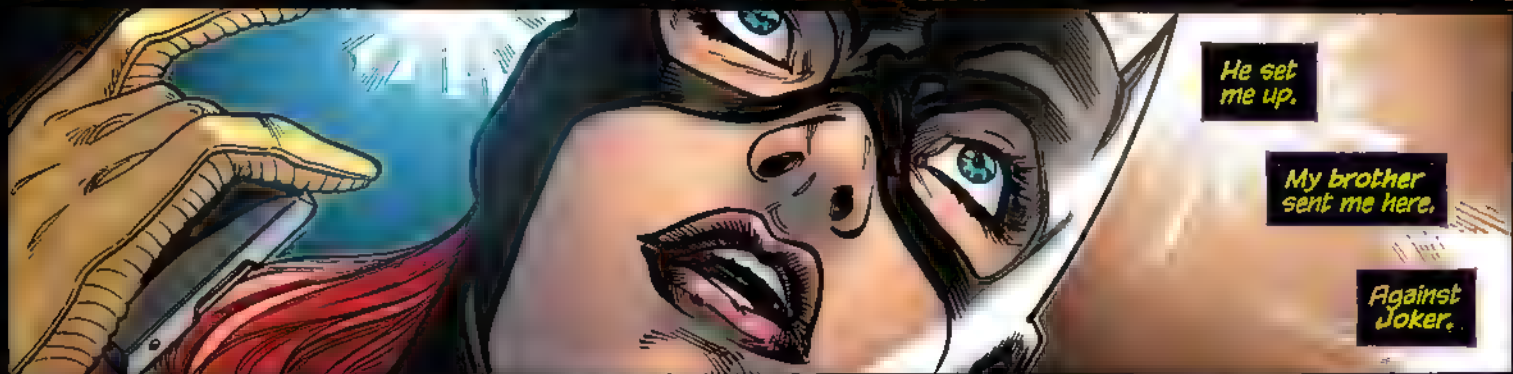
My very sick brother.



He set me up.

My brother sent me here.

Against Joker.

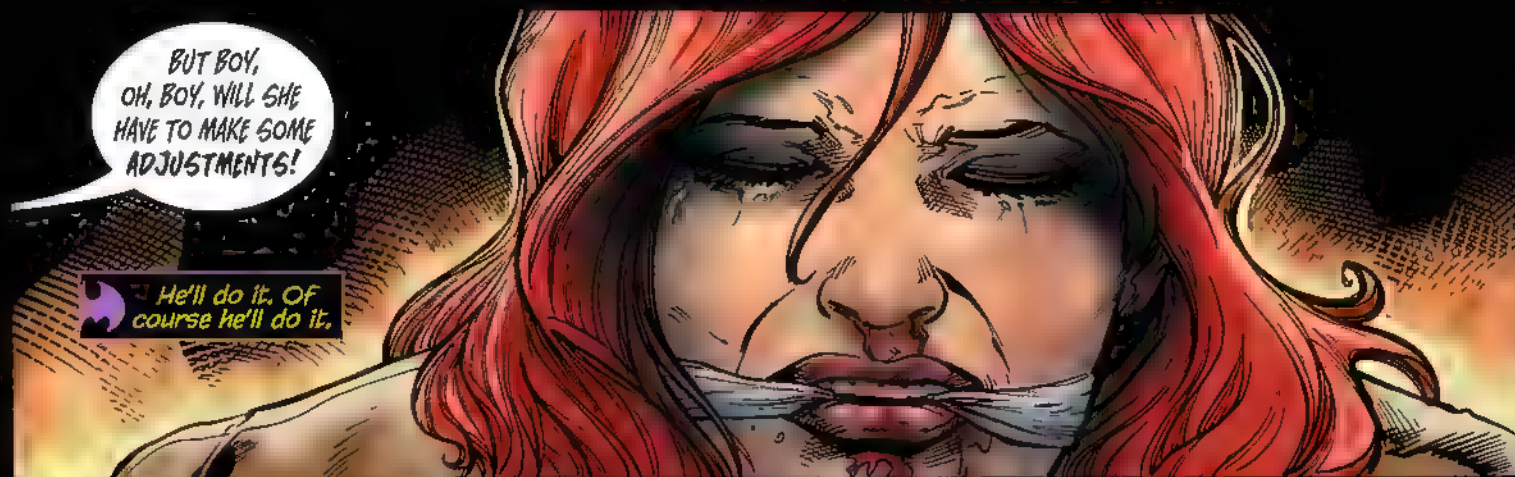


I THINK IT'S ONLY FAIR TO WARN YOU.

THERE'S A FIVE-POUND NAIL BOMB UNDER THIS WOMAN'S CHAIR.

IF YOU GET SASSY, SHE MIGHT SURVIVE.





BUT BOY,
OH, BOY, WILL SHE
HAVE TO MAKE SOME
ADJUSTMENTS!

He'll do it. Of
course he'll do it.



WHAT
DO YOU
WANT?

SEE, THAT'S
THE THING. IT'S
COMPLICATED.



THE
BATMAN,
YES?

HE'S THE KING,
HE'S THE APEX, THE
TOP HEAD CHEESE,
AS IT WERE.

I'VE EVEN
WRITTEN A
BOOK ABOUT
THIS.



AND IT'S
PEOPLE LIKE
YOU WHO WEIGH
HIM DOWN.

CLUTCHING AT HIS
CAPE, DROWNING HIM WITH
YOUR EMPATHY AND YOUR
COMPASSION.



BUT
I HAVE A
PLAN.

YOU'LL
LIKE IT.

IT'S VERY
LOVING, VERY
TENDER.



DEAREST
DOMINOR
DAREDOLL...

...WOULD YOU
DO ME THE GREAT
HONOR OF BEING
MY BLUSHING
BAT-BRIDE?

NEXT: WILL
BATGIRL SAY,
I DO?

DEATH OF THE FAMILY A COURTSHIP OF RAZORS

GAIL SIMONE • WRITER
ED BENES and DANIEL SAMPERE • ART
VICENTE CIFUENTES • INKS, PGS 13-20
MARK IRWIN • INKS, PGS 11, 12
ULISES ARREOLA and KYLE RITTER • COLORS
DAVE SHARPE • LETTERS
ED BENES AND ULISES ARREOLA • COVER
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BATMAN CREATED BY BOB KANE

to skin a Cat

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ASSISTANT EDITOR
RICKEY PURDIN

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HAVE YOU NOTICED,
CAT-THING, HOW BLACK
TENDS TO TRIUMPH? IS
IT A COMMITMENT
THING?

WHITE... WELL,
WHITE DOESN'T LIKE TO
GET DIRTY. IT TENDS
TO RESIGN.

YOU WERE
QUITE THE KILLER IN THE
ENDGAME, CAT-FACE.
WELL-PLAYED.

WHAT DO
YOU WANT
FROM ME,
JOKER?

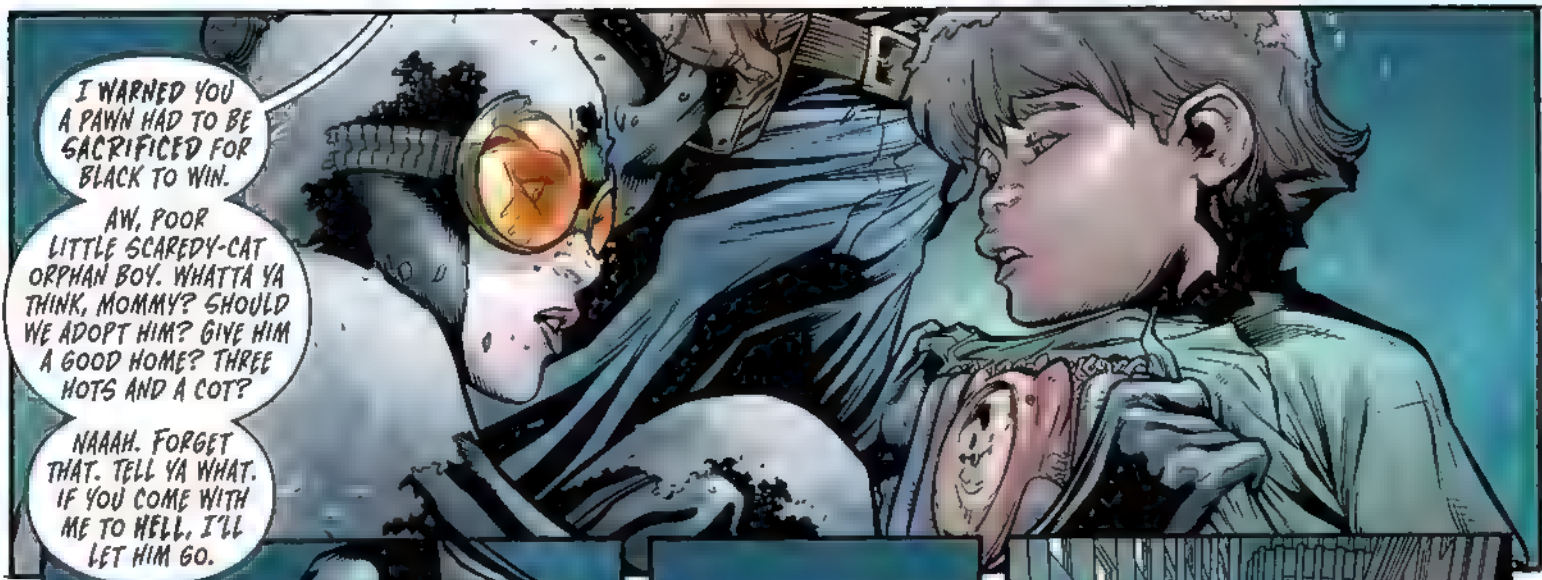
LONG AGO,
CHESS PAWNS WERE
SO DISPOSABLE, THEY
WERE SHAPED LIKE
TRASH-CANS.

DON'T YOU
ENJOY THE ROUGH POETRY
OF THAT: TRASH CANS,
PAWNS, ORPHANS...
OH, NEVER MIND.

JUST
DON'T BE A PAWN,
CAT-GIRL.

WHAT'S
THAT
TICKING?

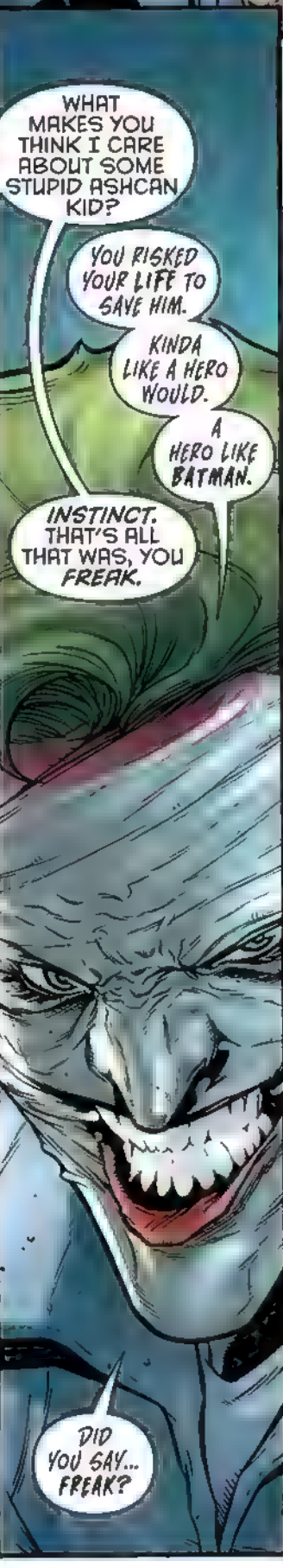
TIK TIK TIK TIK



I WARNED YOU
A PAWN HAD TO BE
SACRIFICED FOR
BLACK TO WIN.

AW, POOR
LITTLE SCAREDY-CAT
ORPHAN BOY. WHATTA YA
THINK, MOMMY? SHOULD
WE ADOPT HIM? GIVE HIM
A GOOD HOME? THREE
HOTS AND A COT?

NAAAH. FORGET
THAT. TELL YA WHAT.
IF YOU COME WITH
ME TO HELL, I'LL
LET HIM GO.



WHAT
MAKES YOU
THINK I CARE
ABOUT SOME
STUPID ASHCAN
KID?

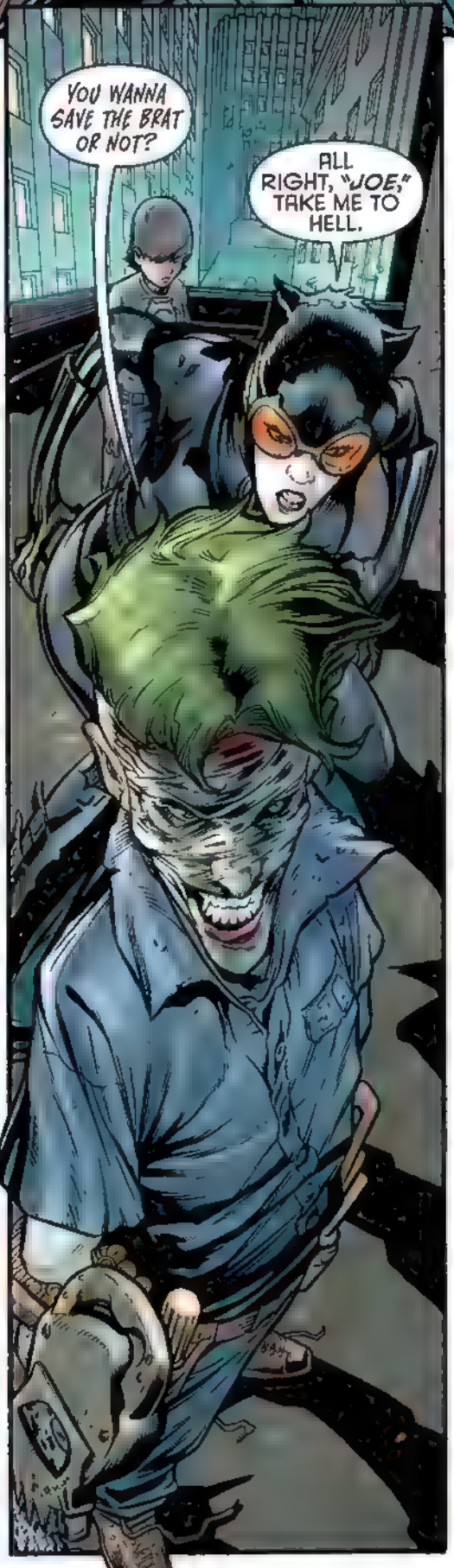
YOU RISKED
YOUR LIFE TO
SAVE HIM.

KINDA
LIKE A HERO
WOULD.

A
HERO LIKE
BATMAN.

INSTINCT.
THAT'S ALL
THAT WAS, YOU
FREAK.

DID
YOU SAY...
FREAK?



YOU WANNA
SAVE THE BRAT
OR NOT?

ALL
RIGHT, "JOE,"
TAKE ME TO
HELL.

THE HELL HOLE RIDE

ELLIOT BEACH AMUSEMENT PARK

THERE
YA GO, KID. A
DEFUSED PUNTER.
HALLELUJAH.

P-TOOM!

DON'T
YOU JUST LOVE BIG
IDEAS? CENTRIFUGAL
FORCE!

A TIN CAN,
BIG AS A BARN SILO,
THAT SPINS SO FAST IT
SMASHES YOU INTO THE
WALLS. ELEGANT, DON'T
YOU THINK?

RUN,
KID!

YOU'LL BE
PLASTERED FLAT AS
A DOLLAR PATTYCAKE,
CAT-THING. YOUR BONES
WILL RATTLE, YOUR BRAIN
WILL DO THE JELLY WOBBLE,
YOUR FACE WILL JUST
PEEL RIGHT OFF--

I JACKED
THIS ONE UP A BIT
FOR YOU--IT'S SET
ON SUPER
SPEED!

WHAT ARE
LITTLE GIRLS MADE
OF? HUNGER AND LICE
AND EVERYTHING VICE.
ROLL THE DICE AND
COME UP MICE.

BYE-BYE,
CATFACE! SO LITTLE
TIME, SO MANY TO
TORTURE.

CHING!

My rib cage...
collapsing... can't
take in any air.

My skin...
it's peeling off...

My eyeballs...
flattening...
can't see!

My teeth!
They hurt...

Got to get to
top... break these
bonds...

SNAP

SNAP

Get outta
here--

Now what? Some kind of
water show at the bridge--
a geyser pointed right
at me!

NO!!!

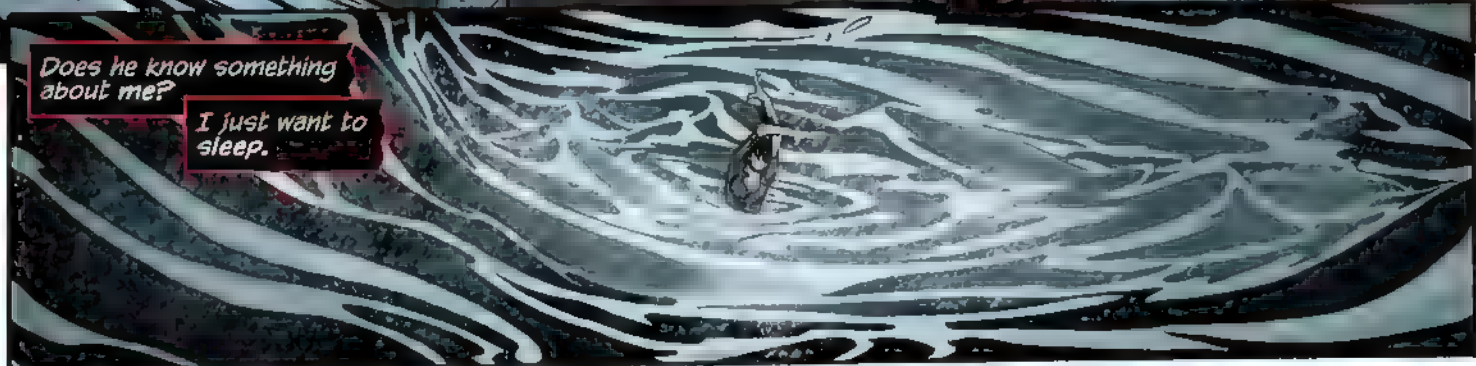
FOOOOSH!



Out of one hell and into another.

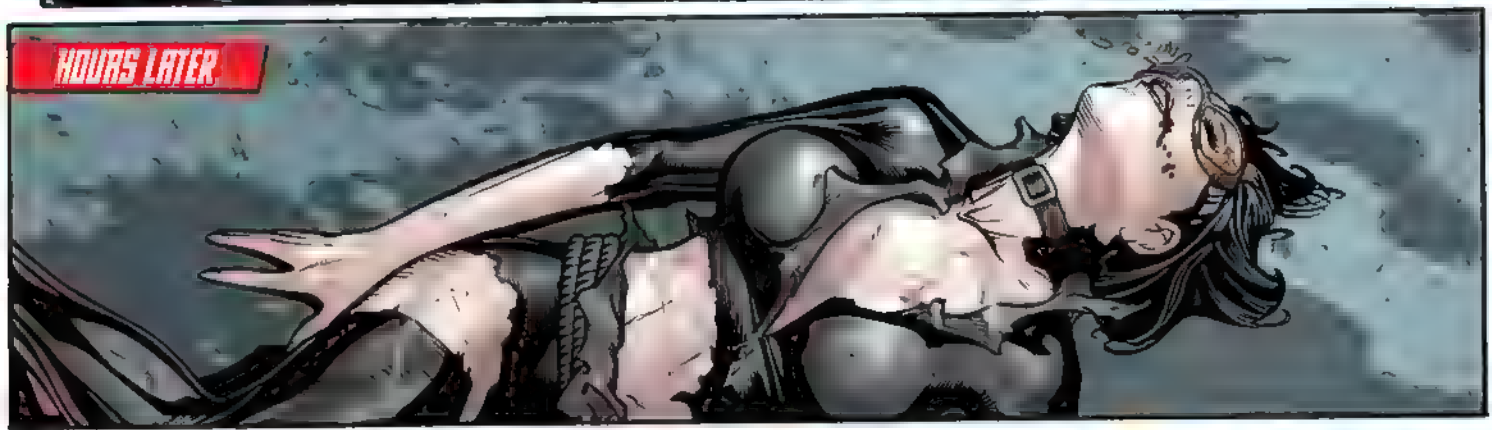
What does Joker want from me?

He steals a boy from an orphanage...ties a bomb to him...tests me to see if I'll save him...why?



Does he know something about me?

I just want to sleep.



HOURS LATER



He's back.

YOU SEE? YOU
DON'T NEED A
KNIFE TO SKIN
A CAT.

SMEK!

NOW WHERE WOULD SLEEPING
BEAUTY BE IF SHE WASN'T
KISSED AWAKE BY HER
PRINCE?

SHE'D
STILL BE DEAD
ASLEEP!

PTU!

SORRY I WAS GONE SO
LONG, SWEETHEART, I HAD
AN APPOINTMENT IN
DIVORCE COURT.

TERRIBLE
TO SEE A WHOLE
FAMILY RIPPED
APART....

WHAT
DO YOU
WANT?

I WANT
WHAT'S GOOD
FOR YOU--STOP
BEING A PATHETIC
LITTLE BATMAN
GROUPIE.

PERHAPS
YOU NEED A NEW
SKIN? SEE THINGS
FROM A DIFFERENT
PERSPECTIVE?

DO
YOU LIKE
SKIN?

LET ME TELL YOU
SOMETHING, GIRL
TO GIRL.

WHAT? I
GOT LIPSTICK
ON MY TEETH?

YOUR
COSTUME...IT
SQUEAKS WHEN
YOU WALK. SQUEAKS
LIKE A MOUSE.

I MADE
YOU A NEW SKIN.
THIS ONE DOESN'T
SQUEAK.

STOP LOVING THE
BAT. YOUR LOVE MAKES HIM
WEAK. BE HIS GREATEST
ADVERSARY AND HE'LL BE
STRONGER.

BE
HIS BLACK
QUEEN!

WHY ARE
YOU PUSHING
ME TO TURN ON
BATMAN?

I DON'T
WANT TO FIGHT
BATMAN.

A PERFECT
FIT. CAN I
ZIP YOU UP,
DEAR?

SKRAK

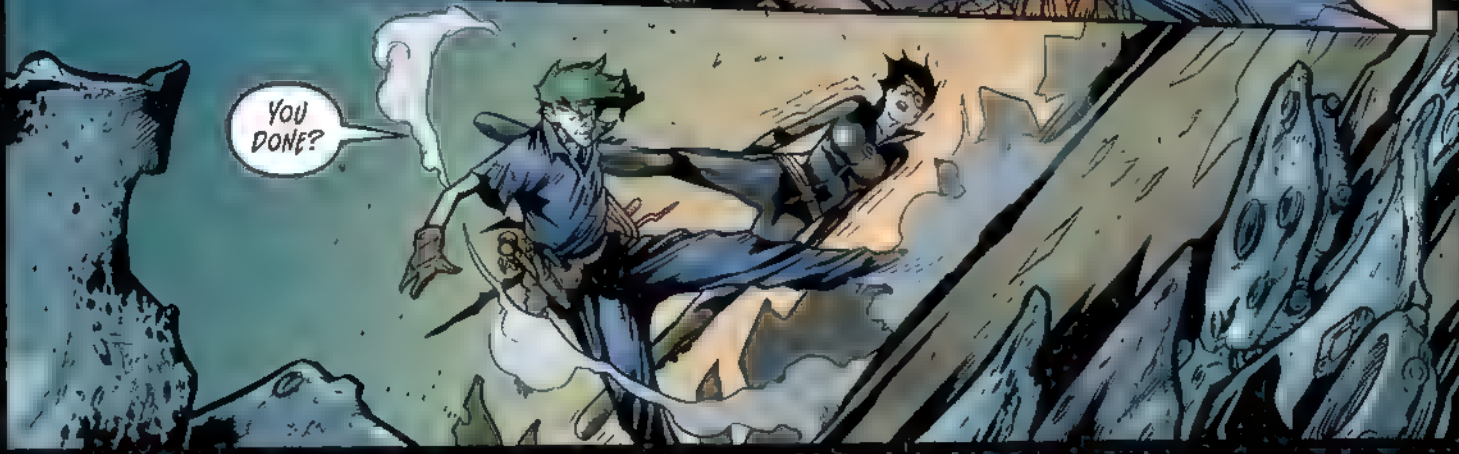
KWOMP



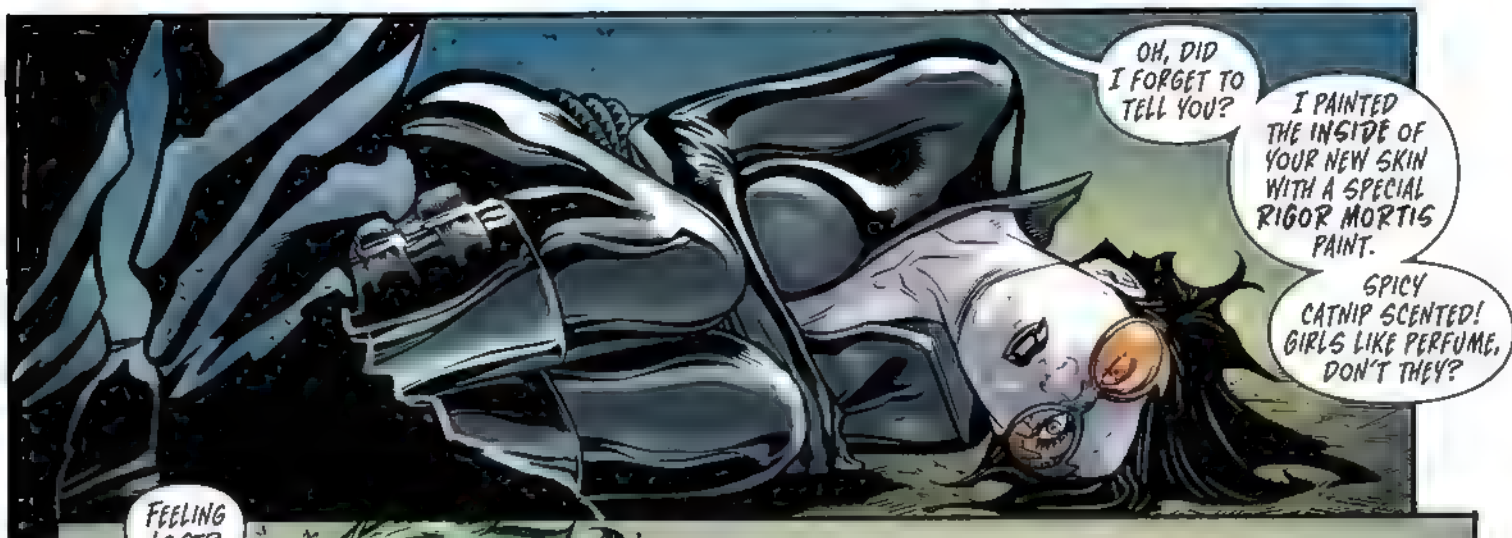
KSPLOK!



STOMP!



YOU DONE?



OH, DID I FORGET TO TELL YOU?

I PAINTED THE INSIDE OF YOUR NEW SKIN WITH A SPECIAL RIGOR MORTIS PAINT.

SPICY CATNIP SCENTED! GIRLS LIKE PERFUME, DON'T THEY?

FEELING LOST?

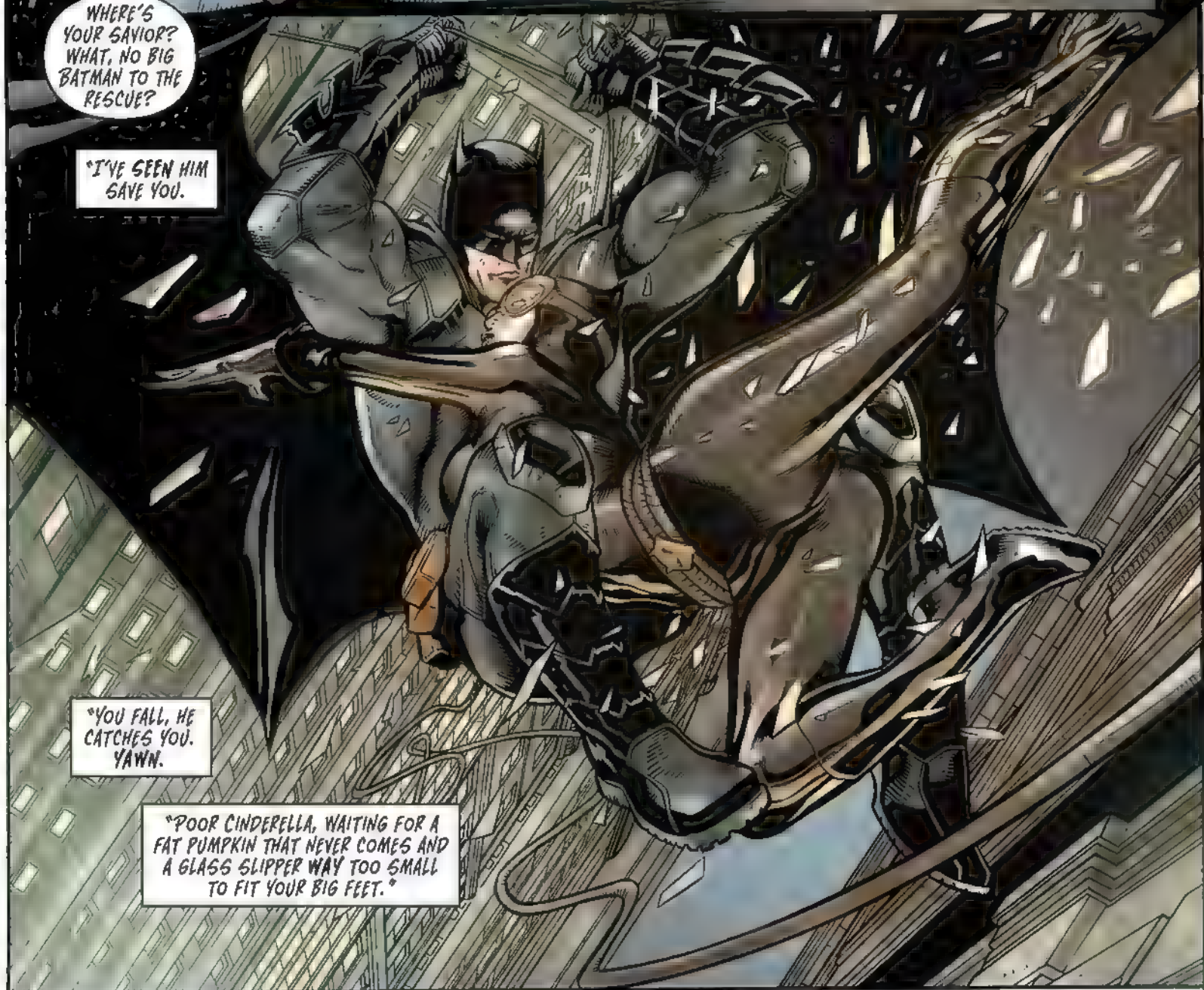
YOU LOOK A WEE SNIP, A TODDLER YEARNING FOR A TEDDY, A THROW-AWAY SCAMP, A SNIVELING PINT BIT A' NOTHIN'.

WHERE'S YOUR SAVIOR? WHAT, NO BIG BATMAN TO THE RESCUE?

"I'VE SEEN HIM SAVE YOU."

"YOU FALL, HE CATCHES YOU. YAWN."

"POOR CINDERELLA, WAITING FOR A FAT PUMPKIN THAT NEVER COMES AND A GLASS SLIPPER WAY TOO SMALL TO FIT YOUR BIG FEET."



*POOR SLEEPING
BEAUTY ALWAYS DEAD
TILL KISSED AWAKE.

*YOU FALL AGAIN, HE
CATCHES YOU AGAIN.
HO-HUM.

*OH YES, AND ONCE UPON A TIME
YOU WERE A HELPLESS DOLL
STUCK IN A DOLLHOUSE--

*TA-DA! BATMAN AND
HIS BATMOBILE TO THE
RESCUE!

*TICK TICK TICK. HOW TIME
FLIES! NOW WHERE IS THAT
BAT? IS HE LATE?*

NOPE.
NOT COMING TO
YOUR RESCUE AT
ALL.

LET
ME CHECK MY
RECORDS.

YUP. HE SAVED
YOU BEFORE.
BUT NOT THIS
TIME.

YOU NEED
A MAN TO COME
TO YOUR RESCUE.
YOU'RE WEAK.
I KNOW WHO
YOU ARE.

WHAT?
WHAT DO YOU KNOW
ABOUT ME?*

WHY--
EVERYTHING! IT'S
ALL IN MY LITTLE
BLACK BOOK!

BWA-BWAAA!

BE
CAREFUL WITH
THAT PRECIOUS
CARGO, MINIONS
MINE.

I JUST
THOUGHT OF
ANOTHER WAY
TO SKIN A
CAT.



STRIP
POKER!

I HAD
THIS LOFTY AERIE BUILT
JUST FOR YOU. A MILE-HIGH
NEST, BECAUSE I DO KNOW
HOW YOU LOVE CROWS AND
A WELL-FEATHERED
NEST.

FLATTERED?

AND TO
REMIND YOU OF THE
PRECARIOUSNESS
OF THE THRONE.

I'LL BE
THE PLAYERS AND
THE DEALER... SINCE,
AFTER ALL, YOU CAN'T
MAKE ANY MOVES
YOURSELF.

WHAT IS
IT ABOUT FACE CARDS I
LIKE SO MUCH? THE QUEEN,
KING, KNIGHT, JOKER....
WHOOPS!!

FULL
HOUSE! I
WIN! YOU
LOSE!

IT'S
THE RULE OF STRIP
POKER--YOU LOSE,
YOU STRIP! OH, WAIT.
YOU'VE ONLY GOT
ONE THING ON. HOW
VULGAR OF ME. BUT
YOU ARE--

--SKINNED
AGAIN!

YOU
CHEATED.

SNIFF
SNIFF!

AND
SOMETHING
STINKS.

BATHE
MUCH?

"THAT WAS
MEAN."

"BUT I'M USED
TO MEAN."

"EVERY DAY, MY BESOTTED AND
GOB-SMACKED OLD MAN GRABBED
MY SCRUFF AND FLUNG ME OUT
OF THE HOUSE LIKE VERMIN--"

"FEND FOR YOURSELF!" HE
YELLED. "DON'T BE EATING
MY MEAT!"

"HE MADE ME SCAVENGE
FOR FOOD IN JUNKPIT
ALLEYS AND TRASHCANS."

I HAD TO FIGHT FOR
SCRAPS TO SURVIVE.

I WAS POSITIVELY
FERAL.



OH, WHAT
A SAD PACK OF
LIES. NOSTALGIA
IS DEATH,
JOKER.

YOU?
PLAYING THE
VICTIM CARD
WITH ME?

WATCH OUT
FOR VICTIMS,
I SAY. THEY'LL
KILL YA.

I ADORE
SMART WOMEN,
LET ME GIVE YOU
A KISS!

DON'T
YOU *DARE*. YOU
DON'T EVEN
HAVE *LIPS*.

TRUE. BUT
THE ANTIDOTE TO
THE RIGOR MORTIS
POISON IS ON
MY--

--PUCKER!

SMEK

MWAH!

I GOT
UNDER YOUR
SKIN, DIDN'T
I?

LITERALLY,
BY THE WAY. I
LEFT A LITTLE
SURPRISE FOR
YOU--

--INSIDE YOUR CATSUIT!

SO GOOD TO BE HOME--

HAVE TO WASH HIS STENCH OFF, FAST.

KNOCK KNOCK

NOW WHAT?

YOU DON'T RETURN MY PHONE CALLS? YOU MAKE ME HAUL BUTT ALL THE WAY OVER HERE? WHAT'S GOING ON?

NOTHING. MAKING MONEY.

YOU'RE UNRAVELED.

BACK OFF, GWEN.

WHAT'S THAT ON YOUR SHOULDER?

NOTHING!

TELL TRIP WINTER TO MEET ME. THAT CLIENT OF HIS IS...JUST TELL HIM.

WHERE?



HOTEL NO-TELL.
ROOM 9.

"AND TELL HIM
NOW."



A one bed, one bible,
one bulb, one towel, pay
by the hour as you go
kinda joint...

THAT CHESS-PLAYING
CLIENT OF YOURS,
THAT JOKER. I DID
HIS HEIST, BUT NOW
HE'S *STALKING*
ME, TRIP.

WHO IS
HE?

JUST A
VOICE ON THE
PHONE. A COUPLE
DROP POINTS
TO PICK UP
CASH.

I'M A
MIDDLEMAN.
I STAY ALIVE BY
STAYING IN THE
DARK ABOUT
THE DETAILS.

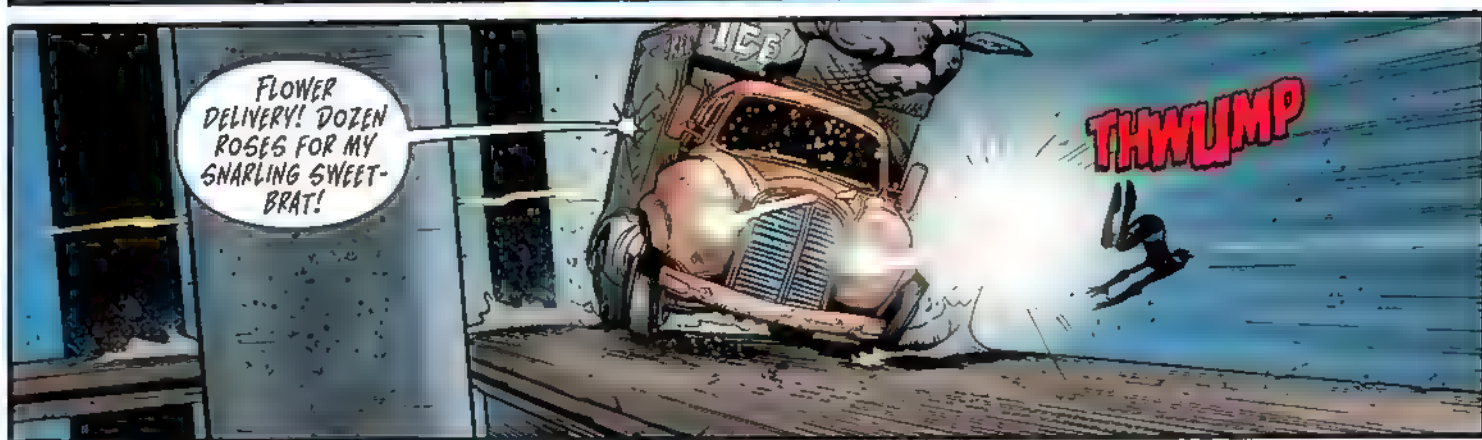
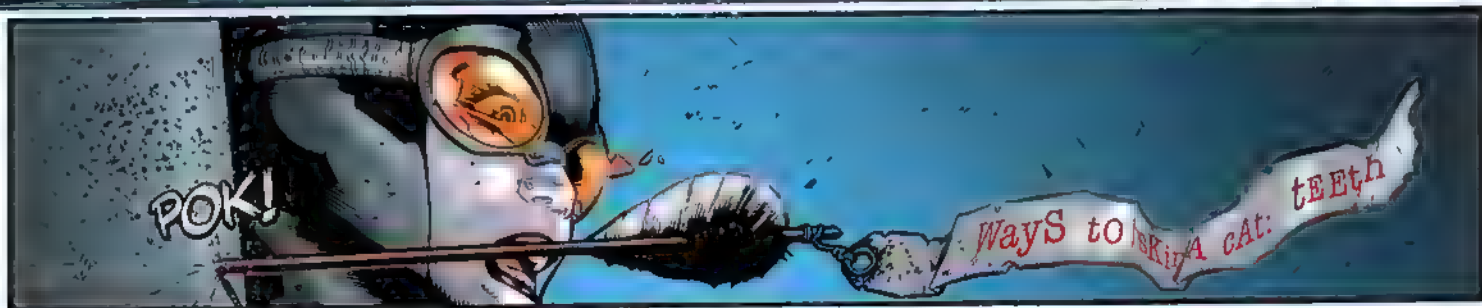
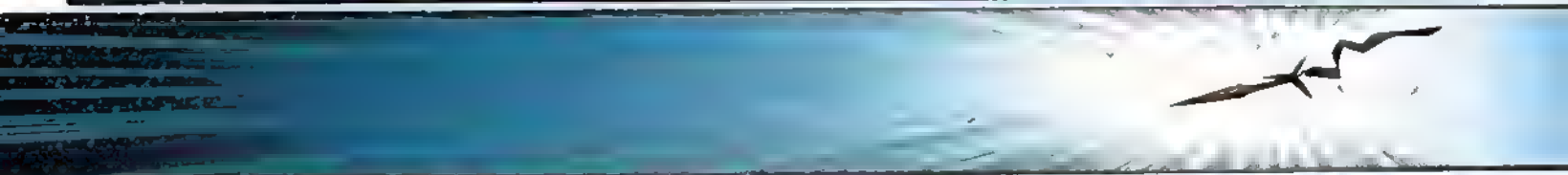


TELL
HIM TO LEAVE
ME THE HELL
ALONE.

HE JUST
DROPPED OFF A
BONUS FOR YOU.
SAID IT WAS FOR
YOUR "ABOVE
AND BEYOND"
WORK.



I NEVER
MET A THIEF
THAT DIDN'T
LIKE TO BE
BURIED IN
CASH.



A large panel showing Catwoman in her black suit and goggles, swinging on a wire. She is looking back over her shoulder with a determined expression. The background shows a cityscape with a large 'X' structure.

I'VE
DISCOVERED
FIVE WAYS TO SKIN
A CAT: KIDNAPPING,
CENTRIFUGAL FORCE,
STRIP POKER, NOW--
PIRANHAS!

A smaller panel showing Catwoman and a man with green hair and a mask swinging on a wire. The man is looking at Catwoman.

ZWIP!

WHAT
HAVE YOU
DONE WITH
BATMAN?

HAHA!
GOTCHA!

A panel showing Catwoman falling through the air, looking down in shock. A large 'X' structure is visible in the background.

YOU DO
CARE.

WHY WERE
YOU SO SCARED
OF A BUNCH OF
WIND-UP TOYS WITH
DENTURES?

A panel showing Catwoman and a man with green hair and a mask. The man is holding a large yellow shark with sharp teeth.

GETTING
PARANOID?



SICK OF GAMES!

WHOMP!

YOU SAID YOU KNOW ME!
WHAT DO YOU KNOW?
WHAT'S IN THAT LITTLE
BLACK BOOK
ABOUT ME?

NO MORE
GAMES. TELL
ME NOW.

Ha
Ha Ha Ha
Ha Ha Ha
Ha Ha

YOU
KNOW, I'M A
CHIVALROUS
GUY.

PLEASE--

BZZZZZZ!

SNAP

--SIT
DOWN.

THUNK!

JUST
WHAT IS IT
THAT YOU WANT
ME TO DO TO
BATMAN?



DO TO HIM? WELL...YOU COULD MARRY HIM.

Ha! The thought's crossed my mind. But...ugh.

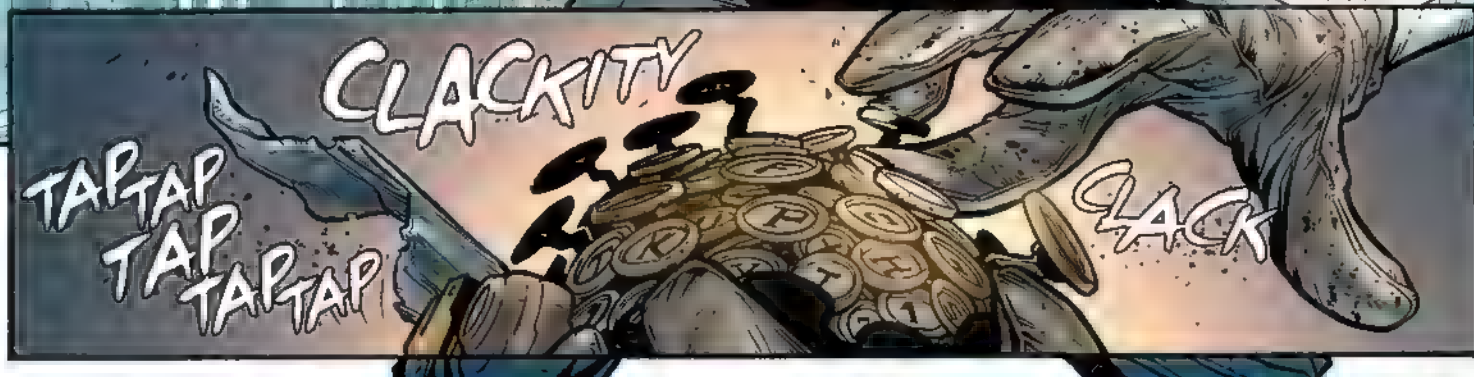
All that sameness and security and safety—I'd bolt. I'd hurt him.

BUT OF COURSE, HE'D START LYING AROUND TOO MUCH, EATING PIZZA, WATCHING TV, ALL THAT SNUGLING AT NIGHT. HE'D BECOME A SOFT BLOB.

WHAT IF YOU DID IT TO RIP HIS HEART OUT! JUST THINK OF WHAT A GREAT MAN HE'D BE, AN INTENSE FIGHTING MACHINE, FUELED BY HAVING NO MORE HEART?

HERE, LET ME PUT IT ANOTHER WAY--

ALL SECRETS SHALL BE REVEALED! ANY FISH CAN BE CAUGHT WITH THE RIGHT BAIT!



SORRY, MY CAPS-LOCK STICKS. AND I NEVER KNOW ON WHICH LETTERS. LOWER CASE, UPPER CASE, IT'S ALL A MESS.

MAKES MY NOTES LOOK LIKE THEY WERE WRITTEN BY A MANIAC!

DON'T YOU HATE IT WHEN THAT HAPPENS?



STOP IT!

YOU KNOW WHAT I JUST FIGURED OUT? YOU DON'T WANT BATMAN DEAD...



...YOU'RE THE ONE IN LOVE WITH HIM.

OF COURSE. ISN'T THAT OBVIOUS?

I WON'T JOIN YOUR FIGHT OR BE ANYONE'S BLACK QUEEN OR WHATEVER IT IS YOU WANT.

I DON'T LOVE HIM. YOU KNOW WHAT BATMAN IS TO ME?



BATMAN IS MY BUZZKILL. BATMAN IS MY SPOILSPORT.

BATMAN IS MY KILLJOY. I DON'T NEED HIM.

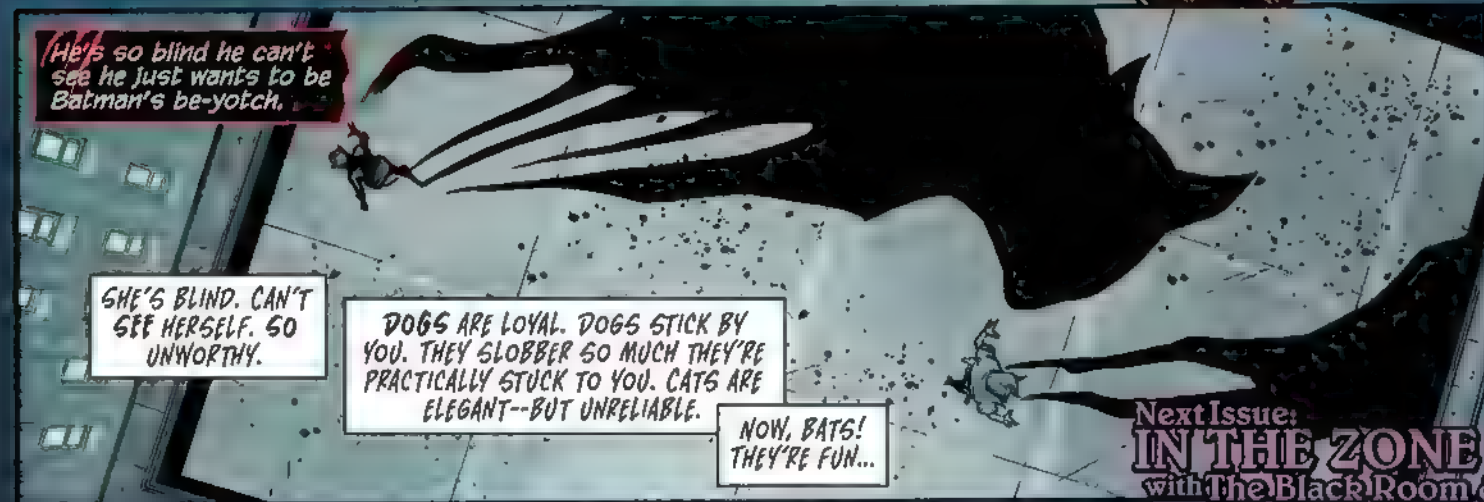
AND ANOTHER THING.

YOU CAN'T EVEN SMILE. ALL YOU CAN DO IS UNZIP YOUR FACE.



YOU DON'T HAVE TO BE SO MEAN. IF YOU DIDN'T WANT TO PLAY, WHY DIDN'T YOU JUST SAY SO?

YOU WIN THE BOOBY-PRIZE: ANOTHER GIFT FROM YOUR BEST DEAD FRIEND. NO RETURN ADDRESS, SORRY.



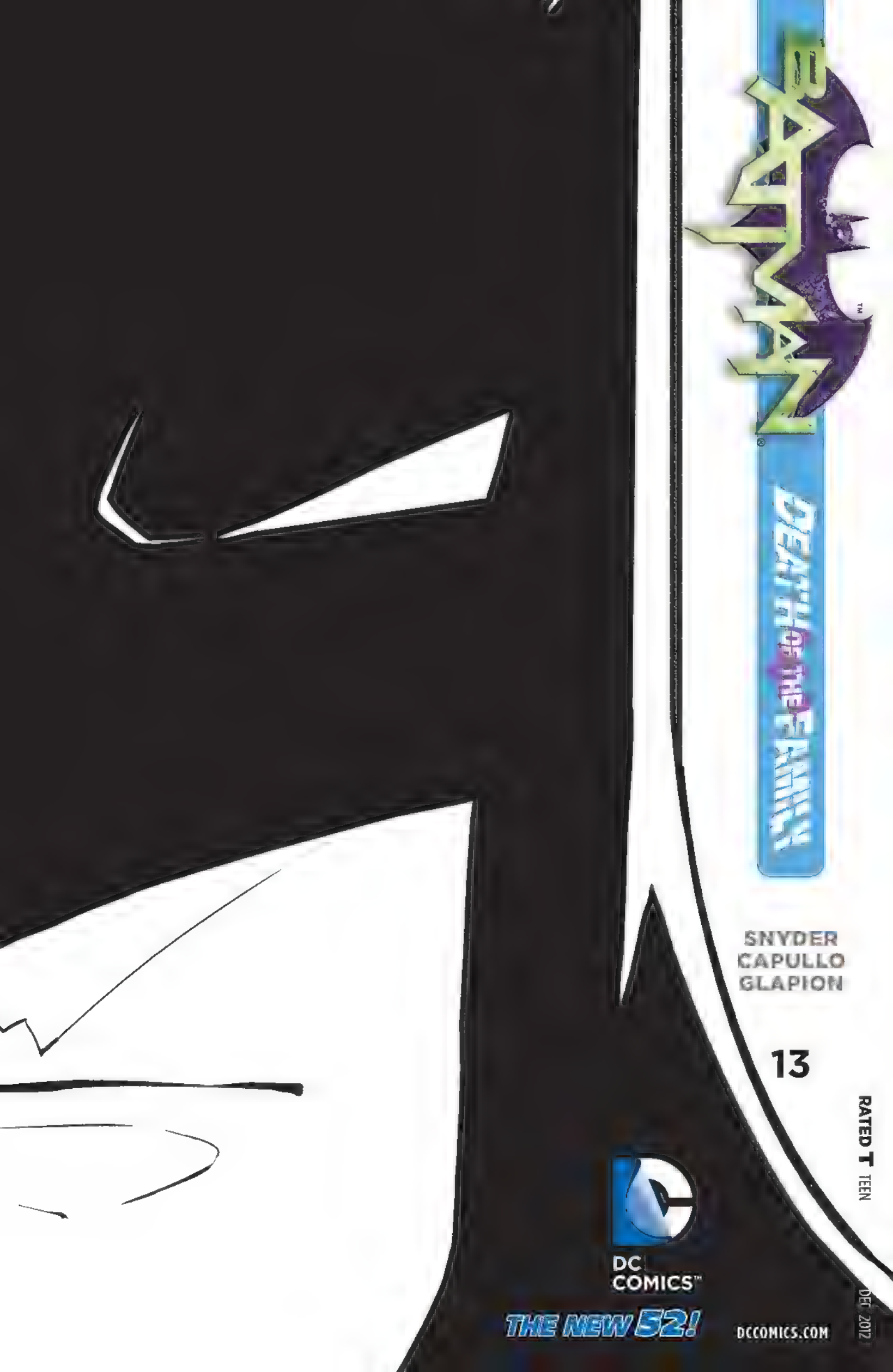
He's so blind he can't see he just wants to be Batman's be-yotch.

SHE'S BLIND. CAN'T SEE HERSELF. SO UNWORTHY.

DOGS ARE LOYAL. DOGS STICK BY YOU. THEY Slobber SO MUCH THEY'RE PRACTICALLY STUCK TO YOU. CATS ARE ELEGANT--BUT UNRELIABLE.

NOW, BATS! THEY'RE FUN...

Next Issue:
IN THE ZONE
with The Black Room &
The Black Diamond!



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DEATH OF THE FAMILY

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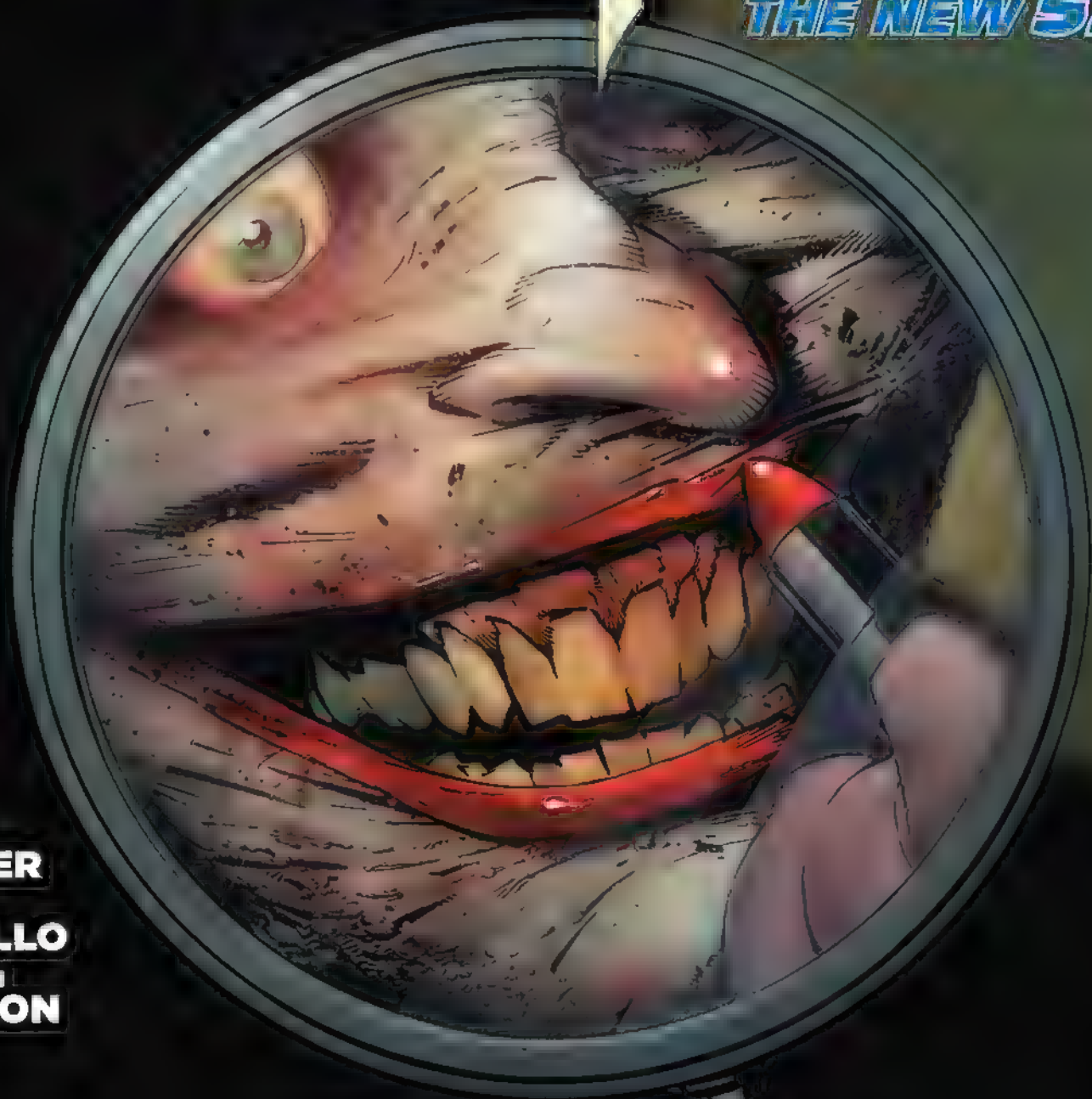


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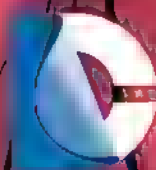
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